

Saudi oil minister set for U.S. visit but not arms talks

KUWAIT (R) — Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali Naimi will visit the United States next week as part of a large Saudi delegation but he is not expected to discuss oil-for-arms deals, Gulf sources said on Thursday.

"I do not believe that there have been even indirect hints (in recent exchanges between the two allies) that there is something like this in the air or laying the ground for it," one source said.

Prince Sultan, the defence minister, is due in France on Saturday and will later go to Washington at the head of a large Saudi Arabian delegation which will include Mr. Naimi, the trade and foreign ministers, a deputy finance minister and several other senior officials and ministers of state, Gulf sources told Reuters.

They said the prince, a full brother to King Fahd, was going to Washington on an official visit in his capacity as second deputy prime minister and not only as defence minister of the world's leading arms importer.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer and exporter, has had a "special" relationship with the United States since the modern state was formed in 1932.

The two sides "will conduct a major policy review of bilateral ties, including oil, economic, trade, political, general security and many other issues," said a Gulf source.

There was speculation earlier this month that Prince Sultan planned to discuss an oil-for-arms formula with the United States amid speculation that Mr.

Naimi would accompany him to discuss details.

Industry experts say although Riyadh and Washington have been discussing a Saudi requirement for 100 fighter jets for several years, they doubt the two sides are close to a deal.

"Just look at what the White House sent Congress in December (proposed foreign military sales). There is no request for fighters for Saudi Arabia in 1997," one source familiar with the agenda for the talks said on Thursday.

Another expert earlier said: "I don't think a final announcement is imminent and Saudi Arabia has not made a formal request to buy F-16s." The Lockheed Martin warplane is high on the Saudi procurement list.

Saudi Arabia "learned its lesson and this is the end of it," one expert familiar with the programme said of Riyadh's oil-for-arms contract with London in the mid-1980s.

He said if Riyadh eventually finalised a deal for the fighters, state-owned Saudi oil company Aramco "will sell the oil, proceeds go to a trust fund at SAMA (Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency or central bank) and then SAMA pays for the aircraft."

In recent months Aramco ended a decade-old arrangement and took control of Al Yamamah \$20 billion oil-for-arms deal with Britain, under which, Royal Dutch/Shell group and British Petroleum marketed some Saudi crude, passing proceeds to British Aerospace to pay for the arms.

Turkey investigates 'human mine detectors' allegations

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish parliamentary commission will probe accusations that security forces made Kurdish villagers act as human mine detectors in the fight against separatist rebels, a government deputy said on Thursday.

But a high-ranking security official said he doubted the allegations that troops forced residents of Tekevir village to walk in front of them over land where mines were believed to have been sown.

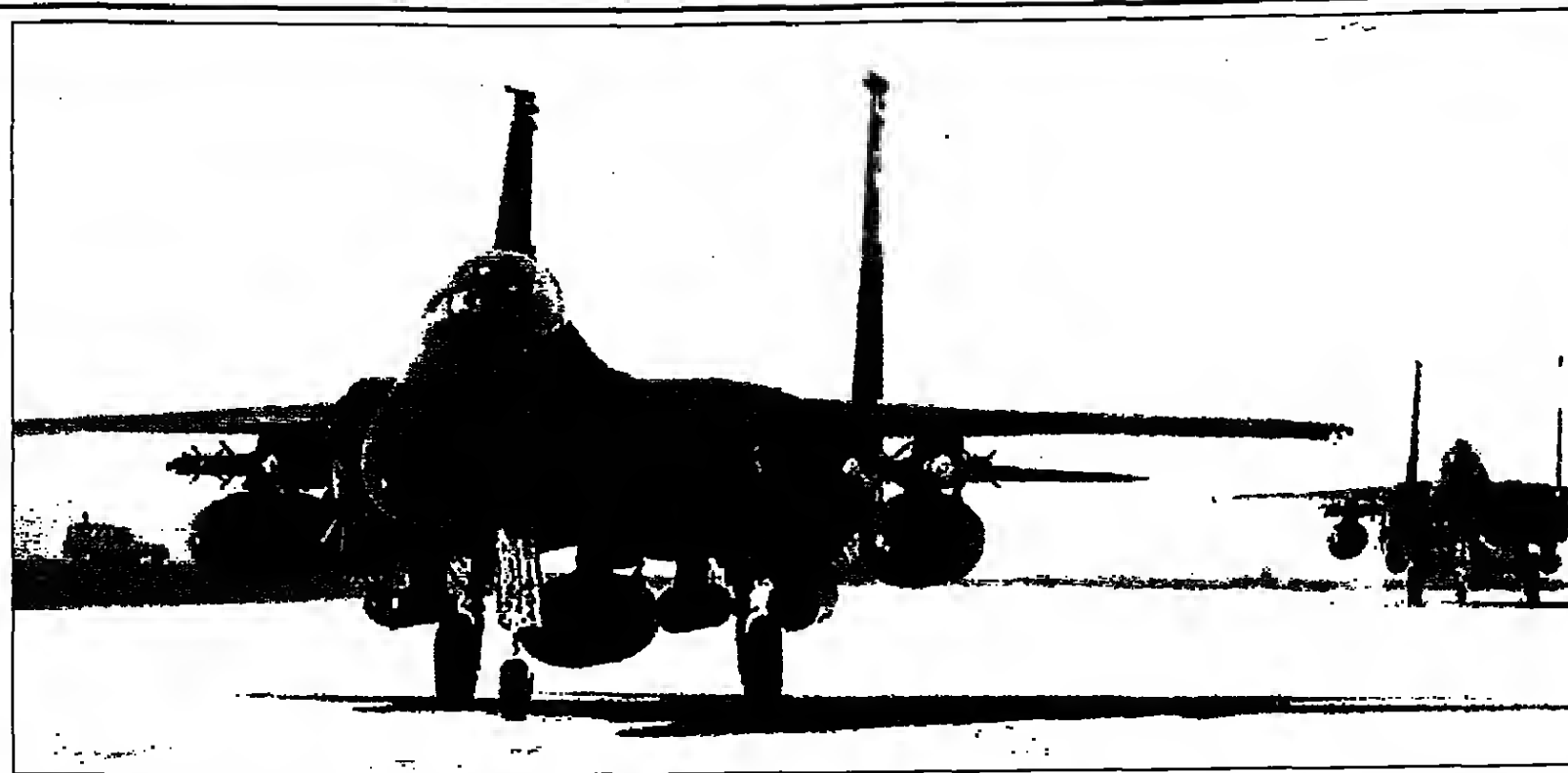
"I am hearing this for the first time but it sounds like a fable. Why would they use people when there are mine detectors?" the security official said by telephone from the southeastern city of Diyarbakir.

Government Deputy Musa Okcu said a parliamentary human rights delegation has to carry out an investigation in Tekevir on Friday. "The villagers told me that security forces had forced them to walk ahead to see if there were any mines on land near the village," Mr. Okcu told Reuters.

He said no mines were found in the incident which happened in the last week of December.

More than 20,000 people have been killed in 12 years of conflict between troops and Kurdish Labour Party guerrillas fighting for self-rule in the mainly Kurdish southeast.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry sent a protest note to Mr. Bagheri, but Turkish lay circles, including the army, considered the measure inadequate.



MISSION IN QATAR: U.S. F15 warplanes land in a Qatari base in Doha. Some 30 U.S. warplanes started to arrive in Doha on Thursday on a temporary mission to support allied enforcement of a "no-fly zone" over southern Iraq. It is the second time an air expeditionary force has been deployed in Qatar, and follows similar deployments in Bahrain and Jordan (AFP photo)

Iranian ambassador and consul quit Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — The Iranian ambassador in Ankara, under fire for allegedly stirring up Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey, has left the country, the Foreign Ministry said Friday. The Iranian consul to Istanbul, Mohammad Reza Rashid, who also made remarks backing Islamic law in an attempt to support ambassador Mohammad Reza Bagheri, has also left Turkey, the ministry added.

"They are no longer in Turkey," an official said. "The ambassador has not officially notified the ministry that he was leaving Turkey," he continued, but did not give further details.

Mr. Bagheri said Islam would triumph throughout the world in a reference to the Islamic revolution in Iran, during Jerusalem night, organised on Jan. 31 by Bekir Yildiz, the pro-Islamic mayor of Sincan, a suburb of Ankara.

Secularism is one of the key tenets of the modern Turkish state and the remarks, hot on the heels of a recent series of pro-Islamic remarks by members of the ruling Islamist Welfare Party, whipped up a storm of protest from secular groups.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry sent a protest note to Mr. Bagheri, but Turkish lay circles, including the army, considered the measure inadequate.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq denies intelligence links to Lebanon arrest

AMMAN (R) — An Iraqi official denied on Thursday reports that a man arrested in Lebanon for suspected involvement in the killing of Iraqi opposition figures was connected to Iraqi intelligence. Saadoun Dawoud, press attache at the Iraqi embassy in Amman, said the reports aimed at discrediting Baghdad and perpetuating U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Judicial sources in Beirut said on Wednesday Bassam Yaqoub Yousef, 28, had been arrested in a convent in Lebanon. He was being questioned over allegedly carrying out political assassinations in Kuwait, London, Morocco and Albania on behalf of the Iraqi intelligence, they said. "We completely deny any link between Bassam Yaqoub Yousef and Iraqi intelligence," Mr. Dawoud said in a statement. This news...is entirely fabricated, devoid of any truth, and paid for by Kuwaiti elements to harm Iraq's reputation and relations with its Arab brothers...to continue the oppressive sanctions imposed for more than six years on the women, children and elderly," he said. No official charges have been filed against Mr. Yousef who had last entered Lebanon on Oct. 15, 1996.

Lebanese shepherd killed in explosion

TYRE (AFP) — A shepherd guarding his flock was killed in an explosion Thursday in South Lebanon near the Israeli-occupied zone, security officials said. The cause of the blast which killed Khodr Ali Shehade, 23, in the Froun area, was not known, they added. A spokesman for the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon confirmed the incident and said an investigation into the origin of the explosion was underway.

Water wells destroyed in Egyptian anti-drug push

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's anti-drug squad has destroyed 100 wells in the Sinai peninsula which drug growers used to water fields, the government daily Al-Masara reported Thursday. The newspaper, quoting a security official, said the measure was part of a major operation against drug growers in the south of the Sinai peninsula which was launched a few days ago. "The anti-drug squad blew up 100 wells in the Sinai which drug traffickers were using to water around 670 feddan of fields to grow narcotics," the official told the newspaper. Around 1,000 police backed by armoured cars and helicopters are carrying out a major operation against drug growers in the region, destroying around 520 acres of poppy, hashish and marijuana fields. Fifteen people were arrested in raids launched last week. Egyptian police launch raids in February of every year to coincide with the harvest of the drug crop.

Greek-Cypriot couple 'seeks asylum'

NICOSIA (AFP) — A Greek-Cypriot couple have crossed into the Turkish-held North and asked for political asylum, in the first such case since Cyprus was divided in 1974, Turkish-Cypriot police said Thursday.

Iran tightens Islamic dress code for women

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has issued on Thursday a new stricter Islamic dress code for women as part of its campaign to turn back encroaching Western influences.

The conservative newspaper Resalat published the guidelines laid out by the Martyr Ghodusi Judicial Centre, which specialises in fighting signs of "decadent" Western culture.

Islamic law, as interpreted here, calls for prison terms of three months to one year, or fines and up to 74 lashes of the whip for the following offences: Any woman wearing a "thin or short scarf in a way that it doesn't cover her entire hair and neck," according to an article provided by Judge Abolfazl Haj Ismaili.

Women dressed in "modish outfits such as suits and skirt without wearing a long overcoat on top," Iranian women have been required to wear a raincoat-like outfit over their regular dress and a scarf under the Islamic dress

code enforced after the 1979 Islamic revolution. But the regulations ban any mini or short-sleeved overcoat or those "flashy ones with fashionable cuts, decorated with any exotic insignia." They also forbid women from wearing "short, thin or mismatched and glowing stockings" as well as those designed with "obscene patterns." The ban includes wearing any "depraved, showy and glittery objects on hats, necklaces, earrings, belts, bracelets, glasses, headbands, rings, neckscarves and ties."

The list extends to the use of "punchy insignia such as the head of a rabbit or eagle, broken or whole cross and foreign flags or other pagan symbols, like victory or goodbye signs" on the clothing.

Clothing bearing pictures of foreign or Iranian celebrities who are symbols of sex or violence, notably any representation of (Hollywood characters) Rocky and Rambo" are also banned.

Iranian women have been required to wear a raincoat-like outfit over their regular dress and a scarf under the Islamic dress

code enforced after the 1979 Islamic revolution. But the regulations ban any mini or short-sleeved overcoat or those "flashy ones with fashionable cuts, decorated with any exotic insignia." They also forbid women from wearing "short, thin or mismatched and glowing stockings" as well as those designed with "obscene patterns." The ban includes wearing any "depraved, showy and glittery objects on hats, necklaces, earrings, belts, bracelets, glasses, headbands, rings, neckscarves and ties."

The list extends to the use of "punchy insignia such as the head of a rabbit or eagle, broken or whole cross and foreign flags or other pagan symbols, like victory or goodbye signs" on the clothing.

Clothing bearing pictures of foreign or Iranian celebrities who are symbols of sex or violence, notably any representation of (Hollywood characters) Rocky and Rambo" are also banned.

Iranian women have been required to wear a raincoat-like outfit over their regular dress and a scarf under the Islamic dress

code enforced after the 1979 Islamic revolution. But the regulations ban any mini or short-sleeved overcoat or those "flashy ones with fashionable cuts, decorated with any exotic insignia." They also forbid women from wearing "short, thin or mismatched and glowing stockings" as well as those designed with "obscene patterns." The ban includes wearing any "depraved, showy and glittery objects on hats, necklaces, earrings, belts, bracelets, glasses, headbands, rings, neckscarves and ties."

The list extends to the use of "punchy insignia such as the head of a rabbit or eagle, broken or whole cross and foreign flags or other pagan symbols, like victory or goodbye signs" on the clothing.

Clothing bearing pictures of foreign or Iranian celebrities who are symbols of sex or violence, notably any representation of (Hollywood characters) Rocky and Rambo" are also banned.

Iranian women have been required to wear a raincoat-like outfit over their regular dress and a scarf under the Islamic dress

code enforced after the 1979 Islamic revolution. But the regulations ban any mini or short-sleeved overcoat or those "flashy ones with fashionable cuts, decorated with any exotic insignia." They also forbid women from wearing "short, thin or mismatched and glowing stockings" as well as those designed with "obscene patterns." The ban includes wearing any "depraved, showy and glittery objects on hats, necklaces, earrings, belts, bracelets, glasses, headbands, rings, neckscarves and ties."

The list extends to the use of "punchy insignia such as the head of a rabbit or eagle, broken or whole cross and foreign flags or other pagan symbols, like victory or goodbye signs" on the clothing.

Clothing bearing pictures of foreign or Iranian celebrities who are symbols of sex or violence, notably any representation of (Hollywood characters) Rocky and Rambo" are also banned.

Iranian women have been required to wear a raincoat-like outfit over their regular dress and a scarf under the Islamic dress

code enforced after the 1979 Islamic revolution. But the regulations ban any mini or short-sleeved overcoat or those "flashy ones with fashionable cuts, decorated with any exotic insignia." They also forbid women from wearing "short, thin or mismatched and glowing stockings" as well as those designed with "obscene patterns." The ban includes wearing any "depraved, showy and glittery objects on hats, necklaces, earrings, belts, bracelets, glasses, headbands, rings, neckscarves and ties."

The list extends to the use of "punchy insignia such as the head of a rabbit or eagle, broken or whole cross and foreign flags or other pagan symbols, like victory or goodbye signs" on the clothing.

Iraq limits number of pilgrims

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq said Thursday it will limit the number of Iraqis making the pilgrimage to Mecca this year after announcing it would help fund the event for the first time since the 1991 Gulf war.

"The authorities will be forced to limit the number of pilgrims because of the cost of organising the pilgrimage," the minister of religious affairs, Abdul Monem Ahmad Saleh, told official newspapers.

Iraq can send 18,000 people under quotas set by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference but will allow only men over 55 years old and women over 50 who have never made a pilgrimage to the Saudi Holy City, he said.

Every Muslim is expected to make the Hajj at least once in his life if he can afford it.

Iraqi pilgrims will also be given a special exemption to leave the country with \$500 each, compared to the \$50 usually imposed on Iraqi travellers.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf, meanwhile, wrote to his counterparts in U.N. Security Council member countries to ask them to unblock \$50 million in Iraqi assets frozen abroad for the purpose of the Hajj.

Iraq's religious leaders decreed in 1995 that Iraqis could not make the pilgrimage because of the economic crisis caused by the U.N. sanctions imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The government announced Tuesday it would contribute to the costs of the pilgrimage for the first time since 1991. Unlike before the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis, Iraqis wanting to make the Hajj could receive no government support.

The move came after Iraq resumed limited oil exports in December under a humanitarian deal with the United Nations aimed at helping Iraq pay for food and medicine in the first easing of the sanctions.

Held Iran editor telephones wife in Germany

BOON (R) — An arrested Iranian journalist whose fate is worrying the Bonn government has telephoned his wife in Germany to say he is well, but that he expects to be convicted, the Tageszeitung daily said on Thursday.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel has written two letters to Iran concerning Faraj Sarkubi, whose wife, Farideh Zebajard, and two children live in Germany. Tehran says it arrested Mr. Sarkubi for trying to leave Iran illegally earlier this month.

Mrs. Zebajard, in a story to be published on Friday, quotes Mr. Sarkubi telling her from prison: "I am well, I can even listen to the radio and watch television."

He said he expected to be convicted, but did not say what for.

The telephone call was the first confirmation that Mr. Sarkubi, editor of the monthly Adineh (Friday), was still alive since he was arrested at the end of January.

BOON (R) — An arrested Iranian journalist whose fate is worrying the Bonn government has telephoned his wife in Germany to say he is well, but that he expects to be convicted, the Tageszeitung daily said on Thursday.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel has written two letters to Iran concerning Faraj Sarkubi, whose wife, Farideh Zebajard, and two children live in Germany. Tehran says it arrested Mr. Sarkubi for trying to leave Iran illegally earlier this month.

Mrs. Zebajard, in a story to be published on Friday, quotes Mr. Sarkubi telling her from prison: "I am well, I can even listen to the radio and watch television."

He said he expected to be convicted, but did not say what for.

The telephone call was the first confirmation that Mr. Sarkubi, editor of the monthly Adineh (Friday), was still alive since he was arrested at the end of January.

Iranian women have been required to wear a raincoat-like outfit over their regular dress and a scarf under the Islamic dress

code enforced after the 1979 Islamic revolution. But the regulations ban any mini or short-sleeved overcoat or those "flashy ones with fashionable cuts, decorated with any exotic insignia." They also forbid women from wearing "short, thin or mismatched and glowing stockings" as well as those designed with "obscene patterns." The ban includes wearing any "depraved, showy and glittery objects on hats, necklaces, earrings, belts, bracelets, glasses, headbands, rings, neckscarves and ties."

The list extends to the use of "punchy insignia such as the head of a rabbit or eagle, broken or whole cross and foreign flags or other pagan symbols, like victory or goodbye signs" on the clothing.

Clothing bearing pictures of foreign or Iranian celebrities who are symbols of sex or violence, notably any representation of (Hollywood characters) Rocky and Rambo" are also banned.

Iranian women have been required to wear a raincoat-like outfit over their regular dress and a scarf under the Islamic dress

code enforced after the 1979 Islamic revolution. But the regulations ban any mini or short-sleeved overcoat or those "flashy ones with fashionable cuts, decorated with any exotic insignia." They also forbid women from wearing "short, thin or mismatched and glowing stockings" as well as those designed with "obscene patterns." The ban includes wearing any "depraved, showy and glittery objects on hats, necklaces, earrings, belts, bracelets, glasses, headbands, rings, neckscarves and ties."

The list extends to the use of "punchy insignia such as the head of a rabbit or eagle, broken or whole cross and foreign flags or other pagan symbols, like victory or goodbye signs" on the clothing.

Clothing bearing pictures of foreign or Iranian celebrities who are symbols of sex or violence, notably any representation of (Hollywood characters) Rocky and Rambo" are also banned.

Iranian women have been required to wear a raincoat-like outfit over their regular dress and a scarf under the Islamic dress

code enforced after the 1979 Islamic revolution. But the regulations ban any mini or short-sleeved overcoat or those "flashy ones with fashionable cuts, decorated with any exotic insignia." They also forbid women from wearing "short, thin or mismatched and glowing stockings" as well as those designed with "obscene patterns." The ban includes wearing any "depraved, showy and glittery objects on hats, necklaces, earrings, belts, bracelets, glasses, headbands, rings, neckscarves and ties."

The list extends to the use of "punchy insignia such as the head of a rabbit or eagle, broken or whole cross and foreign flags or other pagan symbols, like victory or goodbye signs" on the clothing.

ROYAL WINGS (RW) FLIGHTS

20:30Aqaba (RW)

Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every

Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every

Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every

Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg

Apple.....700/500

Banana.....550/550

Banana (imported).....1000/900

Cabbage.....90/50

Carrot.....160/120

Cauliflower.....340/180

Cucumber (large).....180/120

Cucumber (small).....280/180

Eggplant.....230/140

Fava beans.....850/700

Garlic.....1150/950

Grape fruit.....180/100

Lemon.....400/320

Marrow (large).....300/150

Marrow (small).....500/300

Onion (green).....180/140

Onion (dry).....200/130

Orange.....450/250

Peas.....900/700

Pepper (hot).....280/120

Pepper (sweet).....380/250

Potato.....340/150

Radish.....90/50

Spinach.....250/150

String beans.....850/500

Tomato.....200/150

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:08 Cartoon — Mickey & Donald Adventures

14:30Cartoon — Moonin

15:00French Programmes

16:00Gillette

16:30 Doc. — Practical Guide to the Universe

17:00News Headlines

17:10Drama — Blue Heaters

18:00French Programmes

19:30News Headlines

19:35 Comedy — Hangin' With Mr. Cooper

20:00Doc. — Magazine-01

20:30Prism

21:10 Lois & Clark — The New Adventures of Superman

22:00News in English

22:25MacGuyver

23:00 Feature Film: "De Ja Vu Vanessa"

PRAYER TIMES

04:50Dajra

06:08(Sunrise) Duha

11:49Dhuhr

15:00Asr

17:30Maghreb

18:48Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661656

Terra Sancta Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

622366

Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775361

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

The effect of the cold air mass and the depression will last until Sunday evening. So, it will be cold, cloudy and rainy with a chance of snow falling over areas 1,200 metres above sea level and winds westerly active. On Monday, cold weather conditions will prevail with skies partly cloudy and showers in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom. In

Aqaba, it will be cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance of showers and winds southerly active and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.:

Home News



Newly-appointed Iranian Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Ali Sahbani Thursday presents his credentials to HRH Crown Prince Hassan at the Royal Court. Three more ambassadors followed suit — Mohammad Wuld Lakhal of Mauritania, Juan Antonio Lliard of Argentina and Stanislaw Polac of Poland. The ambassadors laid wreaths on the tombs of the late King Abdullah, founder of the Kingdom, and the late King Talal, father of His Majesty King Hussein. Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid, Acting Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Abdul Hadi Majali, King Hussein's Advisor on Tribal Affairs Hamadi Fayez and Royal Court Secretary General Abdullah Seraj attended the ceremony.

Workshop covers Jordanian anxieties towards the peace process

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian anxieties and apprehensions regarding the peace process reflect a series of underlying concerns and disappointments which must be appreciated by all parties if the peace process is to achieve success, a Jordanian writer told a host of Jordanian, Palestinian, Egyptian and Israeli intellectuals Thursday.

"We can break [these] concerns," said five speakers, said columnist Rami Khouri. "Economic and material issues, domestic political issues, regional political issues, international issues and cultural issues."

Mr. Khouri was addressing participants in a two-day workshop entitled "Fear of Peace" in which prominent personalities from Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Israel convened to discuss Arab and Israeli social anxieties wrought by the peace process.

dlement expansion, land confiscation and the reopening of a tunnel near Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

"We might not be able to do anything [to influence Arab-Israeli or inter-Arab relations], but we care," he said. "But if anti-normalisation is the only way that we can express our common Arab identity, we should do it."

Major General Shlomo Gazit of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Research in Tel Aviv discussed the implications of the peace process for the 180,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who now pose one of the thorniest issues in negotiations.

"I want to make clear that no Israeli government is capable of adopting resolutions to remove settlers within the context of a peace agreement with any Arab party," he said.

He classified the settlers as being two groups: ideologues — 12-15 per cent of the total group — who moved to the territories to establish "Eretz Israel" and pragmatists who took advantage of economic incentives.

The easiest to deal with at the end of the day, he said, will ironically be highly religious ideologues.

"These people have one fear," he said, "which is the success of the agreement. For them, the Hebron agreement is the beginning of the end."

General Gazit predicted that this group would try to "sabotage" the agreement through political mobilisation or through the use of terror against Palestinian or Israeli targets.

However, he said, "once they realise their failure, they will have no reason to remain [in the territories]."

"They didn't go there to be a minority; they went as the forefront of an Israeli takeover," he said.

The second group, he said, may agree to remain if they are allowed to be Israeli citizens in a Palestinian state, depending on the specifics of the agreement.

The workshop also focused on cultural concerns, which, for both Arabs and Israelis, have been translated as the fear of a "loss of culture" and the fear of "cultural domination" by one party.

For Israelis, this translates into fear of assimilation, said Israeli author Shulamith Haraven.

"I would suggest that this fear is a strategy of group survival and lack of trust in

a dangerous or hostile environment."

"For Israelis, this attitude has Biblical roots," she said. "Separation from gentiles was the order of the day, and was a strong theological tenant."

It was also the result of the nature of Jewish populations which were "uprooted for generations."

"When a group can't feel attached to a home, a land, a climate, etc., the group itself becomes home and ritual and custom become identity," she said. "Such attitudes are not easy to overcome."

"Israelis are learning that a degree of fraternising and acquiring new dimensions of identity are not identical with the threat of annihilation by assimilation," she said.

The Fear of Peace workshop was hosted by the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies as part of its inter-faith dialogue programme. It opened Wednesday with an address from HRH Crown Prince Hassan, founder of the institute.

"One of the reasons [that we fear peace] may be that human beings are more naturally inclined towards a negative predisposition with regard to the future," he said. "However, positive attitudes must be reinforced in order to impose an agenda for constructive thought and action."

Arab and Israeli aspirations, he said, should include the "development of a peaceful cooperative, economically vital region actively involved in the process of democratisation and suffused by the rule of law and observance of human rights."

"[Ours] will be a region well on its way towards the formulation of a legal, moral, ethical code of conduct between neighbouring states as well as the establishment of different policy criteria for the different sub-regions within its purview."

Prince Hassan said that a "fundamental feature" of the new region will be "soft security" earned by an equitable, pluralistic and just human order.

The new Middle East will work towards a regional security system to a "verifiable weapons of mass destruction-free zone within the context of comprehensive peace."

"Nuclear weapons will be scrapped because they no longer will be necessary for national defence," he said.

Members of municipal council threaten to resign over Zarqa mayor's detention

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As Zarqa Mayor Mustafa Fayad was recovering from high blood pressure over the weekend, efforts to procure his release from detention continued with some members of the Zarqa Municipal Council threatening to resign if the mayor is not released on bail.

The council majority decided Friday to submit their resignation to the minister of municipal and rural affairs and the environment if Dr. Fayad is not released from prison. Deputy Mayor Mohammad Musa Ghweiri said.

Dr. Fayad was ordered detained for 15 days pending trial on Wednesday by Zarqa Prosecutor Azzam Obeidat on charges of slandering Parliament.

A request to release the mayor on bail was rejected by the prosecutor and the court, the source told the Jordan Times Friday.

"We are not against the idea of a trial, we protest his detention," Mr. Ghweiri told the Jordan Times.

The deputy mayor stated that the government assured him Friday that it would exert every effort to release Mr. Ghweiri on bail.

"I met Friday with the minister of justice and the speaker of the Lower House," he stated, "and I received a positive response from both."

Dr. Fayad was transferred Thursday from Berlin prison, north of Amman, to Zarqa Government Hospi-

tal. He had been quoted as describing three-fourths of the deputies in Parliament as "liars" in the Islamist weekly Al Sabeel.

The mayor was also quoted as stating in the interview, "I do not like the whole Parliament and that is my opinion."

His statements angered many deputies including Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Sour who sent a letter to Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughmi requesting the latter to take legal action.

In a Thursday interview with the Arabic daily Al Ra'i, Dr. Fayad denied the statement attributed to him.

"My intention was not to slander the Parliament and what I actually said in the interview was that three-fourths of the deputies in the world are liars," he said.

The Islamist weekly had interviewed both Dr. Fayad and his predecessor Yasser Omari on the municipalities' performances during their respective administrations.

The interviews were run opposite to each other.

Dr. Fayad's remarks in the Al Sabeel interview apparently came in response to Islamist Deputy Bassam Emoush's (Zarqa), remarks in two separate Parliamentary sessions that Zarqa Municipality had been extorting money from citizens and that Dr. Fayad had bribed a reporter by giving him a kiosk in return for news coverage.

Indian embassy organising trade promotion week

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Embassy of India in Amman is organising the second Indo-Jordan Trade Promotion Week from February 23 to 27, 1997, an Embassy of India statement said Friday.

The objective of the week-long event is to create a greater awareness among the business community in Jordan regarding the existing potential of collaboration with their Indian counterparts, it said.

The event was conceived to facilitate business contacts between the two countries as well as to identify avenues for implementing joint venture collaborations and expansions of bilateral trade.

It will be a follow-up to the "Trade Promotion Week" held in Jan. 1996 and aims at systematically actualising promotional activities in trade, investment, technology transfer, services and other industrial sectors, the embassy stated.

As part of the second Indo-Jordan Trade Promotion Week, coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of India's independence, several activities are being organised by the Indian Embassy in Amman.

The Jordanian business community has access to a comprehensive and updated computerised database on Indian industry and trade, the statement said.

Several trade directories have been provided for complimentary distribution to interested visitors to the embassy, it added.

There will be a special focus on "thrust" products which hold immense potential for accelerating the pace of bilateral trade activities, the embassy stated.

During the week, the commercial attaché and other officials of the embassy will be available for consultation, guidance on specific trade-related queries and any other assistance required by the Jordanian business community, the embassy stated.

In 1995, Indian exports of animal feed to Jordan totalled more than \$18 million, and continues to be the leading item of export from India to Jordan, it said.

The embassy is holding a "buyer-seller meeting" in cooperation with the Federation of the Jordanian Chambers of Commerce at 11:00 a.m. on Feb. 26, at the Conference Hall of the Amman Chamber of Commerce as part of the Promotion Week package.

Over 200 Jordanian businesspersons participated in the first Indo-Jordanian Trade Promotion Week last year and the upcoming fair intends to reiterate and further consolidate the commitment of both countries to boosting bilateral trade, the statement concluded.

Jordanian prisoners call for support of hunger strike

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails have issued a call for support for a week-long hunger strike which they plan to stage starting Sunday in protest of their continued detention.

They also addressed open letters to His Majesty King Hussein and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat as well as national and humanitarian groups in Jordan and Palestine.

"We hold great hope for your help as we feel the dawn of freedom is approaching," the prisoners said in the letter. "We have great confidence in you and we hope that you will not abandon us nor leave your sons and freedom fighters languishing behind bars. You no doubt appreciate our struggle for freedom and we do not doubt your backing for us and for our rights and freedom."

"As we issue this appeal, we are certain that you will continue to support us and back our moves to secure our release. Our

slogan will always be: 'Freedom for all Prisoners,'" the statement said.

Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails sent a letter to Jordanian Ambassador to Israel Omar Rifai in which they said: "Today we are calling on you to come to the aid of our brothers, the Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails, who are staging a one-week hunger strike as a first step starting Sunday Feb. 22 in protest against their continued detention by Israel, which refuses to commit itself to an Israeli-Jordanian agreement that provides for the release of the Jordanian detainees in Israeli prisons."

The Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails voiced solidarity with their Jordanian prisoners and appealed for support from various organisations.

The prisoners' appeal was linked to Buthaina Dughma, a Palestinian lawyer during a visit to Askalan Prison on Feb. 16.

UNRWA inaugurates new services compound

By Sacha Baggili
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The inaugural ceremony Thursday for a new United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) services compound in the town of Waqas in the north of the Jordan Valley, highlighted the agency's new strategy of aiding refugees in the region as part of its Peace Implementation Programme (PIP).

An exhibition of the project's construction plans, first initiated in 1993, Mr. Sager added.

In his speech at the inaugural ceremony in Waqas, Commissioner General for UNRWA Peter Hansen stated that the agency was keen to improve the lives of Palestinian refugees both inside and outside the refugee camps.

"This project for a comprehensive facility demonstrates that Palestinian refugees are not simply passive aid recipients," Mr. Hansen said.

According to Mr. Hansen, Palestinian refugees cooperate in the PIP's objective of "help for self-help."

He further added that this project could be replicated in other locations in the region.

"Other mayors have been keen to provide plots of land if funding is made available for the construction of similar facilities. These are all steps of further cooperation between UNRWA and the refugee community in this region," Mr. Hansen asserted.

Waqas Mayor Mohammad Abdul Salam concurred, stating that the new facility is an example "of the fruits of peace which the governments of Jordan and the United States, which remains the single biggest cash contributor to UNRWA, have been dedicated to achieving."

Lewis Lucke, director of the U.S. Aid Mission to

registered with UNRWA had been hindering the agency's desire to expand its services as part of its new programme.

"The new UNRWA compound is the first of its kind in Jordan, as it integrates four fields of work in one building," he said. "By providing easy access, the number of beneficiaries in this area will be greatly increased."

"This is a positive reflection of UNRWA's peace implementation plan, first initiated in 1993," Mr. Sager added.

In his address at the ceremony, Mr. Lucke praised the government of Jordan for "its substantial, ongoing commitment to the well-being of Palestinian refugees."

Jordan has the "largest number of refugees and displaced persons of any UNRWA host country and provides significant material [aid] as well as moral and political support," he continued.

According to Mr. Sager, the Waqas community and surrounding neighbourhoods developed as a direct result of people fleeing areas of the West Bank, which are directly opposite the Northern Jordan Valley, during the 1948 and 1967 wars.

"Most of the population here originated from Bitun, they are rural people who historically make their living through agriculture," he said.

Mr. Hansen referred to the community's "intelligence and hardworking farmers," adding that he "anticipates the happy occasion early next year" when the comprehensive facility is opened and the "deserving community of Waqas" begin to reap the benefits of UNRWA's Peace Implementation Programme.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince visits Aqaba Region Authority

AQABA (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid Thursday visited the Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) where he met with President Fayez Khasawneh. Dr. Khasawneh affirmed the construction of four hotels, with a total of 1,000 rooms, at the estimated cost of JD100 million. Dr. Khasawneh explained that ARA will set up a multi-purpose sports hall for the handicapped on a five dunum plot of land as well as a kindergarten for children with special needs. The kindergarten will comprise a boarding home, treatment and rehabilitation rooms. The authority has also prepared plans to reconstruct the Aqaba Grand Mosque at an estimated cost of JD160,000.

Ministry of Education decides upon exam schedules

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education Friday released the general secondary certificate examination schedules for the scholastic year 1996/1997. Ministry Examination Department Director Ahmad Saleem said the ministry introduced two schedules for this year — one for students who have previously failed the exam and the other for those taking it for the first time.

JBA to participate in Mauritanian event

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) will participate in the six-day meeting of the Second African-Arab Businessmen's Week, due to be held in Mauritania from March 17 to March 20, according to a press release issued by JBA. The week aims to strengthen Afro-Arab cooperation in economic, trade and financial fields. Taking part in the meetings will be representatives from the Arab League, the Organisation of African Unity, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), directors of various Arab and African companies and businesspersons.

What's Going On

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by artist Amanda Shehadeh at the French Cultural Centre, until March 6.
* Display of Jordan River Designs Products, Jabal Amman (Tel. 613081/2) until Feb. 28.
* Art exhibition by Nazliha Salim at Orient Gallery, Isam Ajlouni St., Shmeisani, until Feb. 28.

* Bani Hamida exhibition/sale of handicrafts (rugs, cushions, runners, and wall-hangings, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696/7), until Feb. 28.
* Works by contemporary Arab artists entitled "The New Collection" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, (Tel. 643251/2), until Feb. 27.

Zairean army still pursues conflict despite peace initiative

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zaire is determined to fight rebels controlling much of the east of the country and has kept its army on a war-footing despite moves to launch peace talks with the guerrillas, the Defence Ministry said Friday.

Even as mediation efforts in South Africa gathered pace, Deputy Defence Minister General Likulia Bolongo stressed that no ceasefire order had been issued to troops battling rebel forces.

The Zairean army "has been instructed to wage war to free the occupied regions and bring peace to the country and it has not yet received a counter order to stop hostilities," Gen. Bolongo said in a statement.

"Negotiation is a political move and must not be a capitulation," he added, referring to possible talks between the opposing forces under South African mediation. "Zairean army forces are thus determined to pursue the war to the final victory."

The statement came as a deadline issued by rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila for talks to start expired.

Mr. Kabila, whose rebels

have advanced deep into Zaire after capturing a swathe of territory in the east late last year, warned that his forces would launch an all-out offensive if Kinshasa failed to respond to his ultimatum.

An aide to Mr. Kabila said Friday that the rebel leader was not attending peace talks that South Africa is trying to arrange in Cape Town.

A South African newspaper reported Thursday that Mr. Kabila and an envoy from the Zairean government had arrived Wednesday in Cape Town.

Meanwhile in Kisangani, the northern Zairean town which has become a military base for the army's counter-offensive, fears of a rebel attack were widespread following the expiration of Mr. Kabila's deadline.

Residents were concerned not only of the possible carnage that an offensive could wreak, but also of the reputation of Zairean army forces to resort to rape and pillage in retreating from the attacking Tutsis.

Some with the financial means and with family in Kinshasa have already fled

by boat to the Zairean capital.

Meanwhile, a Zairean rebel official said Friday that Mr. Kabila was ready for his forces to talk to Zairean government officials, but only if they were mandated to take decisions.

Den Bugera, speaking in this rebel-held town in eastern Zaire, said Mr. Kabila was not yet in the South African city of Cape Town, where talks are expected to take place, despite media reports.

Mr. Bugera said Mr. Kabila "is very much in favour of negotiation but not with people who are not mandated to take a decision."

He added that Mr. Kabila had not yet left for South Africa and was "currently in Bukavu," an eastern Zairean town held by the rebels.

A South African newspaper, the Star, reported Thursday that Mr. Kabila and a "special envoy from Kinshasa" had arrived in Cape Town late Wednesday.

The paper quoted South African Foreign Affairs Director-General Rusty Evans.

However, at the United Nations in New York U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard told reporters that Mr. Kabila was expected in South

Africa "by the weekend" following the arrival of a government team.

He said South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki had informed U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan "that a Zairean delegation has arrived in South Africa, and that a delegation on the side of the rebels, headed by Mr. Kabila, is expected to arrive in South Africa by the weekend," Mr. Eckhard said.

Mr. Bugera however confirmed that the rebels' foreign affairs "minister," Bizima Kahama, "had preliminary contacts in Cape Town aimed at agreeing the scope of the negotiations" with representatives of ailing Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko.

South Africa has imposed a virtual news blackout on efforts to bring the two warring sides together.

If they do meet, it will be the first such gathering since civil war broke out in eastern Zaire in October when Mr. Kabila's mainly Tutsi rebel forces rose up in a campaign to overthrow Mr. Mobutu. They accuse him of trying to deny them nationality and seeking to expel them to Rwanda, their ancestral home.



Pakistani policemen carry the body of a victim from the Iranian Centre in Multan town of Punjab province Thursday. At least eight people, including the director of the Iranian Cultural Centre, were killed after unidentified gunmen attacked the centre (Reuters photo)

Underground Pakistani groups claim murder of Iranian diplomat

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — A militant group, named after the slain founder of an extremist Muslim faction, has claimed responsibility for the murder of an Iranian diplomat and six others in Pakistan, press reports said Friday.

The claim was made in messages sent to newspapers late Thursday, hours after gunmen killed seven people in the Iranian Cultural Centre in Multan, including the Iranian consul, Mohammad Ali Rahimi.

The Lahkar-I-Jhang Group blamed Iran for a bomb blast on Jan. 18 in the eastern city of Lahore. Its message said: "We have taken revenge for the terrorist act in which the head of the Sunni militants Sipah-I-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), and 25 others were killed. It alleged that SSP leader Ziaur Rahman Farooqi was murdered at the 'instigation' of Iran when he was taken un-

der heavy police escort from a jail to the Lahore Sessions Court in connection with sectarian violence.

The underground group which had claimed responsibility for previous incidents, is named after the SSP founder Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, who was shot dead in 1990 in the Punjab town of Jhang.

Claiming that "our targets are only those who are enemies of Sahaba (companions of Prophet Muhammad)," a joint statement from the groups' leaders Abu Qasim Malik Mohammad Isbaq and Mohammed Riaz, said that while killing Rahimi it did not harm the policemen on duty.

The SSP, headquartered in Jhang, had reportedly expelled Mr. Riaz nicknamed as Riaz Basra about two years ago for his extremist policies.

Rahimi's body is being flown to Iran in a special

Pakistan Air Force plane late Friday. Mushahid Hussain, a close aide of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, will accompany the body, the foreign office here said.

Mr. Sharif has condemned the murder and ordered investigations into the killings and arrest of those involved in the attack.

Officials said security had been tightened around Iranian installations after the killings.

A foreign office spokesman expressed "deep shock" over the murder and said whatever the motivations of the perpetrators, "we will never allow anyone to disrupt our time-tested relations with Iran."

Vowing to continue to work in close concert with the government of Iran in safeguarding "our deep friendship," he said the two countries would "defeat the nefarious designs of such criminal and terrorist elements."

No progress on N. Korean defector expected until after Deng funeral

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea does not expect progress in talks with China on the fate of a top North Korean defector until after the funeral of Chinese patriarch Deng Xiaoping, a senior official said Friday.

"I think we can wait until the mourning period ends on Feb. 25," Foreign Ministry Asia-Pacific Affairs Director Ryu Kwang-Sok said.

"I don't think it is desirable from the point of view of traditional oriental etiquette for us to give the impression that we are urging China on the Hwang issue

during the mourning period," Mr. Ryu said.

But he added the Chinese side had advised South Korean diplomats that they should feel free to contact them "if the need arises" during the mourning period for Mr. Deng who died Wednesday at the age of 92.

The defector, 74-year-old Hwang Yang-Yop has been booted up in the South Korean consulate in Beijing behind heavy Chinese security since he walked into the building Feb. 12 and asked for asylum.

North Korea at first angrily charged that Mr. Hwang,

Pyeongyang's top ideologue, had been abducted, then conceded that he could have defected.

Mr. Ryu also told a press briefing here that negotiations over the defection with Chinese authorities had "yet to reach the point at which we can discuss the terms and conditions of sending Mr. Hwang to the South."

The defection has posed a delicate problem for Beijing which maintains a careful equidistant policy towards the rigidly Stalinist North, its old ally during the 1950-53 Korean War, and Seoul.

Shuttle ends successful Hubble mission

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AFP) — The U.S. space shuttle Discovery landed early Friday at Kennedy Space Centre after a successful 10-day mission to change the Hubble space telescope into a "new window" to the unknown.

The shuttle made a smooth touchdown here at 3:32 a.m. (0832 GMT), some 90 minutes later than originally planned due to cloud cover over the landing site.

It was the ninth landing of the U.S. shuttle programme, which has run 81 space missions. Four night landings, including the Discovery's, took place at Cape Canaveral; the remaining five, at California's Edwards Air Force Base. After their launch on Feb. 11, the Discovery's crew of se-

ven astronauts gave Hubble a new computer system, installed new imaging devices and patched up the exterior of the space telescope over the course of five spacewalks totaling 33 hours, 11 minutes.

Discovery released the telescope early Wednesday, 580 kilometres above the Earth. "You have opened a new window on the world," NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin told the astronauts after the release manoeuvre.

"We have Hubble space telescope II," said Ed Weiler, director of scientific programming at Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas.

With the new equipment, scientists are hoping the Hubble telescope will see further than ever, allowing them to observe the formation of galaxies.

Since it was placed in orbit in 1990, Hubble has offered scientists views of the collision of galaxies, the surface of Pluto, the birth of stars and has revealed the existence of quasars.

The telescope's exterior insulation, tattered and torn after years of exposure to temperature extremes, was repaired with makeshift patches during an unscheduled fifth spacewalk.

Rudd Moe, who was in charge of the repairs, back on Earth, said the space mission was "a big success, including the surprises."

The telescope should operate smoothly until the next repair mission in 1999, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said. Its total life expectancy is 15 years.

Liz Taylor's undergoes brain surgery

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Doctors removed a benign Tumour Thursday from actress Elizabeth Taylor's brain lining and predicted that she would make a full recovery.

"The Tumour was totally removed," said Dr. Martin Cooper, head of the Neurosurgery Department at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre, adding that "everything went quite smoothly."

"Ms. Taylor is resting comfortably in the intensive care unit," he said after leading the four-hour operation. He said she was recovering from her anaesthesia and had begun moving her extremities.

Asked at a news conference about the risk of epileptic seizures that sometimes follows

brain surgery, he said there was only a "small chance" this could happen, though "it is too early to tell."

"The next 24 hours are important for her and we'll see how she is going to do. But we expect a full recovery," Dr. Cooper said.

Ms. Taylor's children and grandchildren were at her bedside after the operation, her spokeswoman, Sbrine Ann Coburn said.

Ms. Coburn said that when she went into the surgery Ms. Taylor was "pretty positive about the whole thing, pretty optimistic. Now she's a little woozy," she said Ms. Taylor was besieged by phone calls from around the world and "thanks all her friends and fans for all their good wishes."

Among the cockpit crew was a former Soviet pilot who is helping to train Sri Lankans in the use of ex-Russian aircraft, the sources said. The air force did not give the name of the foreign pilot.

The cause of the crash was not immediately clear but witnesses said the plane broke into two after hitting the ground.

130 Sri Lankan refugees die on the way to India

COLOMBO (AFP) — At least 130 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees drowned when their boat capsized on its way to India, Tamil Tiger guerrillas said over their clandestine radio Friday.

The overloaded boat was carrying 150 passengers when it sank two days ago off the island's northwestern Mannar coast, the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said.

The Tiger radio said only 20 of the 150 passengers were rescued and quoted the survivors as saying the boat operator was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the tragedy.

The Tigers said 85 bodies had been recovered and announced a day of mourning Saturday for the victims. They said 62 of the bodies had been identified while a search was on for the other victims.

The incident took place in an area where the government has little control and no direct communications are available.

The boat tragedy occurred as thousands of government soldiers kept up an advance to link the northern town of Vavuniya with the northwestern military base at Mannar.

Fourteen people were killed off the coast of Mannar in a similar boat accident in October when a craft meant to take 40 passengers was loaded with 110 men, women and children.

An identical boat with 105 Tamil men, women and children was detained by the Sri Lankan Navy in October and the passengers told authorities the Tigers forced them to seek refuge in neighbouring southern India.

Sri Lanka and India have stepped up naval patrols to prevent an exodus of Tamil refugees fleeing to the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, where thousands of Sri Lankans have already taken refuge over last year.

Thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils fled to Tamil Nadu in a massive exodus after some 600 Tamils were killed in ethnic violence in the south of the country in July 1983.

A second exodus occurred after the LTTE resumed its war against the Sri Lankan government in June 1990. Many went back over the years, although Tamil Nadu is still home to more than 100,000 refugees.

While nearly 57,000 of them are housed in Indian government-aided camps, the others live on their own across Tamil Nadu, which is home to 55 million Indian Tamils.

Although support for the LTTE has dwindled in Tamil Nadu since the Tigers were blamed for former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in 1991, some political parties still back their cause.

Meanwhile, a military transporter crashed just outside the Sri Lankan capital Friday, killing at least four soldiers and injuring 45, officials said.

The Russian-built Antonov-32B aircraft was taking off with a full load of security personnel when it plunged into a swamp within the Ratmalana Airport, officials said.

They said the plane was on a routine flight to the northern air base of Palaly taking troops to battle separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas when the under carriage collapsed, causing the pilots to ditch the aircraft.

Among the cockpit crew was a former Soviet pilot who is helping to train Sri Lankans in the use of ex-Russian aircraft, the sources said. The air force did not give the name of the foreign pilot.

The cause of the crash was not immediately clear but witnesses said the plane broke into two after hitting the ground.

Chirac: Moscow ties NATO expansion to accord

BUCHAREST (R) — French President Jacques Chirac was quoted as saying that Russia would accept the inclusion of up to five new members in an expanded NATO if the alliance signed a separate deal with Moscow.

"Either there is this accord and they (Russia) are ready to accept the admission to NATO of three, four or five countries, or there is no accord and then they will oppose the expansion of the alliance," Mr. Chirac told the Bucharest daily Adeva-

rule on the eve of a visit to Romania.

Mr. Chirac gave no details of an accord but said he had discussed it within the framework of NATO expansion during talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin earlier this month.

Russia has repeatedly opposed NATO's eastward expansion due to be announced in July, but has said its security concerns could be allayed by the conclusion of a separate accord with the Atlantic alliance.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky said in Moscow before U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's arrival that an accord "is meant to reduce to a minimum the unavoidable negative consequences of the bloc's expansion."

In his interview, Mr. Chirac said Mr. Yeltsin had no objections to France's

drive to have Romania included in the first wave of expansion. "The Russians will not pose difficulties for Romania," he told Adeva-

rule. Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic are favourites for rapid inclusion but the prospects for Romania and Slovenia appear to have improved recently.

France, he said, would help Romania put to good advantage its strategic position on the Black Sea and with ex-Soviet Ukraine as its northern neighbour creating a land corridor towards Poland.

"For NATO, it (Romania) is very important, especially for the southern flank of the alliance," he said.

Mr. Chirac singled out the peaceful transfer of power in Romania's elections last November, when centrists ousted ex-Communists for the first time since the 1989 execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

He was expected during his two-day visit to back Bucharest's goal of eventually joining the European Union.

France also encouraged Bucharest and Kiev to overcome differences rooted in World War II and sign a long-delayed post-Communist treaty. Mr. Chirac praised a similar pact which Romania signed with Hungary last September, ending old rifts over borders and ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chirac singled out the peaceful transfer of power in Romania's elections last November, when centrists ousted ex-Communists for the first time since the 1989 execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

He was expected during his two-day visit to back Bucharest's goal of eventually joining the European Union.

France also encouraged Bucharest and Kiev to overcome differences rooted in World War II and sign a long-delayed post-Communist treaty. Mr. Chirac praised a similar pact which Romania signed with Hungary last September, ending old rifts over borders and ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chirac singled out the peaceful transfer of power in Romania's elections last November, when centrists ousted ex-Communists for the first time since the 1989 execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

He was expected during his two-day visit to back Bucharest's goal of eventually joining the European Union.

France also encouraged Bucharest and Kiev to overcome differences rooted in World War II and sign a long-delayed post-Communist treaty. Mr. Chirac praised a similar pact which Romania signed with Hungary last September, ending old rifts over borders and ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chirac singled out the peaceful transfer of power in Romania's elections last November, when centrists ousted ex-Communists for the first time since the 1989 execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

He was expected during his two-day visit to back Bucharest's goal of eventually joining the European Union.

France also encouraged Bucharest and Kiev to overcome differences rooted in World War II and sign a long-delayed post-Communist treaty. Mr. Chirac praised a similar pact which Romania signed with Hungary last September, ending old rifts over borders and ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chirac singled out the peaceful transfer of power in Romania's elections last November, when centrists ousted ex-Communists for the first time since the 1989 execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

He was expected during his two-day visit to back Bucharest's goal of eventually joining the European Union.

France also encouraged Bucharest and Kiev to overcome differences rooted in World War II and sign a long-delayed post-Communist treaty. Mr. Chirac praised a similar pact which Romania signed with Hungary last September, ending old rifts over borders and ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chirac singled out the peaceful transfer of power in Romania's elections last November, when centrists ousted ex-Communists for the first time since the 1989 execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

He was expected during his two-day visit to back Bucharest's goal of eventually joining the European Union.

France also encouraged Bucharest and Kiev to overcome differences rooted in World War II and sign a long-delayed post-Communist treaty. Mr. Chirac praised a similar pact which Romania signed with Hungary last September, ending old rifts over borders and ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chirac singled out the peaceful transfer of power in Romania's elections last November, when centrists ousted ex-Communists for the first time since the 1989 execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

He was expected during his two-day visit to back Bucharest's goal of eventually joining the European Union.

France also encouraged Bucharest and Kiev to overcome differences rooted in World War II and sign a long-delayed post-Communist treaty. Mr. Chirac praised a similar pact which Romania signed with Hungary last September, ending old rifts over borders and ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chirac singled out the peaceful transfer of power in Romania's elections last November, when centrists ousted ex-Communists for the first time since the 1989 execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

Algerian rebels reportedly kill 180 government forces

PARIS (Agencies) — Algeria's Islamic Salvation Army, the armed wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front, said in a statement its guerrillas had killed over 180 members of the security force in recent clashes in 13 regions across Algeria.

The statement, sent Thursday to an international news organisation, said that among the government forces killed were about 80 soldiers and paramilitaries shot dead in "fierce confrontations" in the western region of Saida.

It was not possible to verify the statement which was dated Feb. 15.

More than 180 Muslim guerrillas have been killed by the Algerian security forces in Algiers and nearby towns in the past four weeks, according to Algerian newspapers.

Meanwhile, a moderate Algerian Islamic leader warned Thursday that it appeared some factions in Algeria wanted to provoke his movement to violence, reporting that 115 of his sup-

porters have been killed in five years.

Ex-presidential candidate Mahfoud Nahnah, leader of the Islamic Society Movement (MSI - Hamasi), said "certain forces" wanted to draw his group into the spiral of violence which has racked Algeria since the cancellation of general elections in January 1992.

He said the most recent deaths of MSI members were the killings of five young women decapitated and left in the street in a village near Algiers. He gave no further details.

The Islamic leader, defeated in November 1995 presidential ballots, accused the unidentified forces of "wanting to push us to dirty our hands and implicate us in the bloodshed," in the Arab language Al Hayat newspaper.

Hamas, which recruits mainly among the middle class, is the second most important fundamentalist party after the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

Mr. Nahnah believes in a modern and tolerant Islam and a positive coexistence between all political movements but has vowed not to sit down at the conference table with "those who come with a Kalashnikov."

Armed militants have threatened to kill him but he is equally mistrusted by more moderate politicians who have accused him of wanting the same objective ultimately as the FIS: A hardline Islamic state.

Unrest has reached fever pitch in Algeria in recent weeks, with more than 400 civilians killed by Islamic militant groups according to unofficial death tolls.

In 1993, MSI Deputy Leader Mohammad Bouslimani was assassinated by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Algeria's most hardline militant group.

U.S. officials estimate that 60,000 people have been killed since the cancellation of the second round of general elections the FIS was poised to win five years ago.

Financial Secretary Donald Tsang would also remain in his position as Hong Kong's top economic policy planner, a decision likely to be welcomed by the markets.

"I am very pleased that all eligible serving officers have been appointed as principal officials in their present posts," Mr. Tung said in a statement issued to the media upon his return to Hong Kong Thursday.

More than 150 years of British rule ends at mid-

U.S. moves to head off repeat of Cuba shutdown

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has moved to avoid a repeat of last year's shooting down of Cuban exiles by Cuban government jets, warning both sides to respect the law during a planned exile demonstration next week.

The State Department told Florida-based exiles planning to fly planes near the coast of Cuba Monday they would be in "serious danger" if they entered Cuban airspace or territorial waters without Cuba's permission.

But the department said in a statement it had also urged Cuba to respect the safety of anyone who did enter its territory during ceremonies to mark the first anniversary of the shooting down of two exile-operated light planes.

At the Pentagon, Defence Department spokesman Ken Bacon told reporters that the U.S. military did not "plan any different procedures or heightened alerts on Feb. 24."

The U.S. statement was issued hours after the Cuba warned that it would tolerate no violations of its airspace or territorial waters during the ceremonies.

Cuban Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mariamela Ferriol, asked if Cuba might be prepared to use force, said: "We will take all measures necessary to prevent a violation of our airspace or territorial waters."

Cuban-American groups in Florida said last week their plans to mark the anniversary included sending planes to international waters between Cuba and Florida to drop wreaths over the site of the plane downings.

Hong Kong's future leader reappoints top colonial team

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's future leader Tung Chee-hwa chose continuity and announced Thursday he would reappoint Hong Kong's top tier of civil servants to their positions in his post-colonial administration.

Hong Kong's popular and influential Chief Secretary Anson Chan, deputy to departing British Governor Chris Patten, will serve as Mr. Tung's number two when Hong Kong reverts to China later this year.

Her post will be renamed administrative secretary.

Financial Secretary Donald Tsang would also remain in his position as Hong Kong's top economic policy planner, a decision likely to be welcomed by the markets.

"I am very pleased that all eligible serving officers have been appointed as principal officials in their present posts," Mr. Tung said in a statement issued to the media upon his return to Hong Kong Thursday.

More than 150 years of British rule ends at mid-

night on June 30, 1997, now 131 days away.

Prominent lawyer Elsie Leung was named as secretary for justice, replacing Attorney General Jeremy Mathews who, as a non-ethnic Chinese, was not eligible to remain in his position.

Mr. Tung had flown to Beijing to report on his decision to China's top leadership, landing in the Chinese capital just hours before the announcement of the death of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping.

More than 150 years of British rule ends at mid-

Thousands of people gathered throughout the city to mourn the death of the Greek leader.

Greek coup

ATHENS (R) — The Greek leader, who was a member of the military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974, died of a heart attack at his home in Athens.

The Greek leader, who was a member of the military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974, died of a heart attack at his home in Athens.

The Greek leader, who was a member of the military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974, died of a heart attack at his home in Athens.

The Greek leader, who was a member of the military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974, died of a heart attack at his home in Athens.

The Greek leader, who was a member of the military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974, died of a heart attack at his home in Athens.

The Greek leader, who was a member of the military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974, died of a heart attack at his home in Athens.

The Greek leader, who was a member of the military junta that ruled

130 Sri Lankan refugees on the way to India

COLUMBO (AP) — About 130 Sri Lankan refugees, mostly women and children, were seen on a boat off the coast of India, according to a radio report. The refugees were being taken to India by a Sri Lankan naval vessel. The boat was seen off the coast of India on Saturday. The refugees were being taken to India by a Sri Lankan naval vessel. The boat was seen off the coast of India on Saturday. The refugees were being taken to India by a Sri Lankan naval vessel. The boat was seen off the coast of India on Saturday.

Groups diplomat

An Islamic group has accused the U.S. State Department of being involved in the assassination of a diplomat. The group, which is based in the Middle East, claims that the U.S. government is trying to cover up the killing of a high-ranking official. The diplomat was killed in a car bombing in a city in the Middle East. The group says that the U.S. government is trying to hide the truth about the killing. The group has threatened to take further action if the U.S. government does not stop its involvement in the assassination.

defector funeral

A defector from a communist country was buried in a funeral ceremony. The defector had lived in the communist country for many years before fleeing to the West. He was a high-ranking official in the communist government. The funeral was held in a large hall in the West. Many people attended the funeral. The defector was buried in a cemetery in the West. The funeral was a significant event in the country.

mission

A mission to the Middle East was announced by the U.S. government. The mission is led by a high-ranking official from the U.S. State Department. The mission is to meet with officials from the Middle East to discuss the situation in the region. The mission is expected to return to the U.S. in a few days. The mission is a significant step in the U.S. policy towards the Middle East.

surgery

A surgery was performed on a patient in a hospital. The surgery was a major operation. The patient was in good health after the surgery. The surgery was a success. The patient is now recovering from the surgery. The surgery was performed by a team of surgeons. The surgery was a significant event in the hospital.



Hundreds of people gather in Beijing's central Tiananmen Square to watch the funeral procession for Deng Xiaoping, who transformed China from a backward Stalinist state to an economic powerhouse. Deng died in Beijing aged 92 Wednesday (Renter photo)

Greek court acquits Muslim journalist

ATHENS (R) — The publisher of a Turkish-language newspaper in northern Greece was acquitted Thursday in a case that had drawn protests from human rights and media groups. The court found that the publisher was not guilty of the charges against him. The case had been a major issue in Greece. The court's decision was a significant victory for the publisher. The case had been a major issue in Greece. The court's decision was a significant victory for the publisher.

Peruvian rescuers dig for bodies as mudslides loom

KERAPATA (R) — Under the constant threat of more mudslides, Peruvian rescue workers dug on Thursday for the bodies of up to 300 peasants missing in Tuesday's massive landslide which swept away two Andean mountain-side villages. The rescue workers were working in difficult conditions. The mudslide had been a major disaster in Peru. The rescue workers were working in difficult conditions. The mudslide had been a major disaster in Peru. The rescue workers were working in difficult conditions. The mudslide had been a major disaster in Peru.

Glenn announces U.S. Space Day in May

WASHINGTON (R) — Former Astronaut John Glenn said Thursday he was retiring from the U.S. Senate and marked the 35th anniversary of his orbit of the Earth by announcing a National Space Day in May to promote space exploration. Glenn is a well-known figure in the U.S. space program. His announcement was a significant event. Glenn is a well-known figure in the U.S. space program. His announcement was a significant event. Glenn is a well-known figure in the U.S. space program. His announcement was a significant event.

China, world mourn Deng Xiaoping

BEIJING (R) — China is mourning Deng Xiaoping, the man who lifted it from rank poverty to a burgeoning economic superpower, while world leaders paid tribute to him for freeing the world's most populous nation from its Socialist shackles. Deng, 92 and in the advanced stages of Parkinson's disease, died late Wednesday of respiratory failure. In the words of U.S. President Bill Clinton, he had been an "extraordinary figure on the world stage over the past two decades." A single red flag fluttering at half-mast over Beijing's Tiananmen Square was a rare public sign of sorrow at the loss of the chief architect of China's capitalist-style reforms. Authorities decreed six days of mourning, but in contrast to the outpouring of grief following Mao Tse-tung's death in 1976, Beijing residents reacted calmly and analysts dismissed fears of an immediate power struggle. The nation had long been prepared for the departure of its diminutive paramount leader. Last television film of Deng, taken in Shanghai in 1994, showed an attentive daughter supporting his fragile five-foot (152-cm) frame, his gravelly chain-smoker's voice reduced to a hoarse whisper. In Beijing Thursday, apart from cordons sealing off the alley leading to Deng's home near Tiananmen, there was little intrusive police or military presence in the capital. Deng's chosen heir, Jiang Zemin, 70, remained silent and invisible. The only hint the mantle of supreme authority had passed to the former tractor factory manager was an announcement that he would head a 459-strong committee to organize Deng's funeral, set for next Tuesday in the Great Hall of the People. It will be a no-frills affair. No foreign dignitaries are invited. Sources said Deng will be cremated in a brand new incinerator to avoid contamination from other people's ashes, but there was no word on a date. News of Deng's death, flashed around the world, brought a shower of tributes. Asian leaders said his reforms transforming China into an economic powerhouse had earned him a place among the world's great statesmen. From Pakistan to New Zealand, prime ministers and presidents heaped praise upon Deng, saying he would long be remembered for dismantling the Socialist chains that for decades had tied down China's vast population. Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said he was greatly saddened at Deng's death and hoped it would not affect crucial Sino-Japanese relations, which he said were of growing importance for peace and stability of the world. Further afield, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl called Deng "one of the great leadership personalities of China's recent history." French President Jacques Chirac praised him as the main architect of China's modernization. Respected rather than loved — Mao once called him a "needle wrapped in cotton" — Deng guided China's transformation starting in 1978 from Communist backwardness to "socialism with Chinese characteristics," his term for a market-driven economy. Yet he never wavered from a belief in the supremacy of the Communist Party, purging two previous untested successors for liberal leanings and ordering the army to crush pro-democracy demonstrations around Tiananmen Square in 1989. Historians will debate whether his legacy of prosperous peasants and workers, enjoying unprecedented control over their lives, outweighs his failure to bestow political freedoms. "In the name of the people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, its government and myself I send our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased and people of China for the loss of the great leader whom we thank for his contribution in advancing the relation between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the People's Republic of China." His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan also sent his condolences to President Jiang on the death of China's paramount leader. Deng guided China's transformation starting in 1978 from Communist backwardness to "socialism with Chinese characteristics," his term for a market-driven economy. Yet he never wavered from a belief in the supremacy of the Communist Party, purging two previous untested successors for liberal leanings and ordering the army to crush pro-democracy demonstrations around Tiananmen Square in 1989. Historians will debate whether his legacy of prosperous peasants and workers, enjoying unprecedented control over their lives, outweighs his failure to bestow political freedoms. "In the name of the people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, its government and myself I send our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased and people of China for the loss of the great leader whom we thank for his contribution in advancing the relation between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the People's Republic of China." His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan also sent his condolences to President Jiang on the death of China's paramount leader.

U.S. army reassigns commander in sex abuse scandal

FRANKFURT (R) — The U.S. army said Thursday it has replaced with a woman the male commander of a training center in Germany where three male instructors are alleged to have raped and sodomized female soldiers. The army said First Sergeant George Watlington has been removed as head of the Darmstadt Training Center, where 11 women soldiers have alleged they were sexually assaulted or harassed by male sergeants from last November to January. Sgt. Watlington was "administratively reassigned" and replaced by Sergeant First Class Elizabeth Weaver at the center, where soldiers arriving for duty in the Darmstadt area, near Frankfurt, attend a two-week orientation program. The probe at the Darmstadt Base surfaced this month and is the first in Europe after a series of scandals at army bases in the United States in recent months, including accusations of sexual misconduct at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. Army officials have conceded that some of the alleged incidents in Darmstadt occurred after a special panel was set up to probe the extent of sexual abuse in the army around the world. The panel will visit army bases in Germany, Italy and Bosnia until early March to meet soldiers who want to report incidents of sexual abuse or harassment. The Darmstadt probe has so far led to two instructors being held in custody since Feb. 7 for alleged interference with the investigation. A third instructor has been put on leave. No charges have yet been filed against the men as military prosecutors were still investigating. The Stars and Stripes, the unofficial newspaper of the military, reported Thursday that one of the instructors was under investigation for rape, sodomy, cruelty and maltreatment of a subordinate and a second for the same charges as well as for indecent assault.

Violence flares up again in Albania protests

TIRANA (R) — Violence flared up in Albania's capital as popular protests against the right-wing government of President Sali Berisha, sparked by the collapse of fraudulent Pyramid investment schemes, entered their sixth week. Riot police prevented about 1,000 opposition supporters from marching to central Tirana Thursday. The demonstrators hurled hundreds of stones at security forces, some of whom fired live rounds into the air to disperse the angry crowd. Truckloads of police, supported by plain-clothes security men, moved in with truncheons and hit several protesters. Witnesses said they saw at least four persons who were bleeding, injured either by stones or police batons. The Interior Ministry said in a statement that five policemen were slightly wounded and seven protesters were taken to the Police Commissariat. About 7,000 protesters gathered earlier in a soccer field just outside Tirana to demand the government's resignation. The opposition blames Mr. Berisha's ruling Democratic Party for the crisis that engulfed Albania after five high-risk investment funds collapsed last month, robbing tens of thousands of people of their life savings. Mr. Berisha, his voice hoarse after a week crisscrossing the country to try to win back popular support, addressed 5,000 party faithful at a central Tirana rally. But, in a sign that support within his party may be slipping, 14 Democratic Party members of parliament published a petition urging Prime Minister Aleksander Meksi and his cabinet to step down. The signatories included Gezim Zija, mayor of the southern town of Vlore where three protesters were killed during pitched street battles with riot police last week. About 60 students in Vlore began a hunger strike to demand the government's resignation and full compensation for investors whose savings were wiped out when two local Pyramid schemes folded. About 5,000 marchers staged a 16th day of anti-government street protests in Vlore Thursday, witnesses said, and local opposition leaders vowed to step up their campaign unless the government heeded their demands. Penniless investors blame Mr. Berisha's right-wing government for not halting the growth of the schemes and for failing to warn them of the risks involved. "We are here to demand not only our money back but also all those years the government stole from U.S.," Neritan Ceka, leader of the Democratic Alliance Party, told protesters in Tirana. Gei-rich-quick investment schemes boomed in Europe's poorest nation after it began to emerge six years ago from almost half a century of Stalinist isolation. Financial experts estimate that Albanians' sunk up to \$2 billion in such funds. Desperate investors swarmed around the headquarters of the Vefa Holding Group, the country's biggest company, after it promised to refund money to its many thousands of small investors. Vefa, which controls \$80,000 accounts, was one of four investment firms which froze client assets in January, fearing a run on accounts after five Pyramid schemes failed. But despite Vefa's pledges, few investors believed they would ever see their money again. "The others lied to us and they're lying to us, too," one woman in the crowd said. A Tirana banker agreed, saying: "Unless the company gets new loans very soon, they'll go under."

Colombia signs anti-drug accord with wary U.S.

BOGOTA (R) — Colombia signed an anti-drug shipping agreement with Washington Thursday, a day after beefing up its penalties for drug trafficking in a bid to stave off threatened U.S. economic sanctions. The maritime ship-board agreement, which clears the way for U.S. Coast Guard searches aboard Colombian vessels outside the country's 12-mile limit, is something the United States had sought to negotiate for the last six years. It is highly controversial. since politicians have bridled for years against the idea of U.S. vessels policing Colombians on the high seas, and Venezuela is the only other country on the Latin American mainland that has such an agreement. In practice, however, it merely formalized something the United States has been doing for years with the quiet consent of Colombian authorities. U.S. authorities have detained at least 30 Colombian ships on drug-smuggling charges since 1990. Colombia is under intense U.S. pressure to step up its war against billionaire cocaine merchants and the maritime accord was included on a long list of demands Washington made last year when it warned that Colombia faced a suspension of trade benefits or other sanctions unless its performance improved. Other demands included the passage of an asset forfeiture law to take wealth away from convicted drug lords, which was approved by Congress late last year, and stiffer penalties for trafficking, which were passed by both houses of Congress in back-to-back sessions Tuesday and Wednesday. U.S. officials were unhappy last month when a Colombian judge handed down extremely lenient prison terms for brothers Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela, the top leaders of the powerful Cali drug cartel who once cornered up to 80 percent of the world's cocaine trade. The sentences could see them walk free in as little as five years.

Russia celebrates half-century of Kalashnikov

MOSCOW (R) — Fifty years and 70 million guns on, Russia feted Mikhail Kalashnikov Thursday, marking half a century since the humble Soviet sergeant designed the automatic rifle that became the weapon of choice from Beirut to Bosnia. Opening an exhibition in Moscow showing dozens of the hundred-odd versions of his basic 1947 design — the AK-47 — the sprightly and diminutive 77-year-old was happy to take credit for what he called "my gift to the fatherland." But he rejected responsibility for the countless deaths his brainchild has caused across the globe, in wars and civil conflicts, hijackings and gangster shootouts. Most recently Chechen guerrillas turned Kalashnikovs on the Russian army with deadly effect. Russian mafiosi shoot each other with them daily. "I want weapons to stay in the hands of responsible armed forces not in the hands of criminals," Col. Kalashnikov said. Lionised and much-decorated by the Soviet authorities, for whom military technology took precedence over all other fields of research, Col. Kalashnikov said he at last felt free to give voice to the frustrations of his early career. In faltering tones, he told a gathering of military brass and reporters of his struggle to get his design accepted in the face of searing scepticism on the part of established military engineers that a mere sergeant with no special training could produce a weapon to counter Nazi Germany's wartime technology. Wounded in his tank in 1941, Kalashnikov turned his mind to a reliable machine pistol after listening to the complaints of Soviet Infantrymen in hospital that their cumbersome carbines were no match for the light, rapid-firing German Schmeissers. But his first attempts briefly earned him arrest by the ever suspicious Stalinist authorities and the war was over before his ideas found a willing audience among his military superiors. The collective principles of the Soviet period also seemed to rankle. It was a chance write-up in a U.S. magazine in the 1960s that forced the Soviet authorities to pull Kalashnikov from Siberian obscurity — and promote him to colonel. "Before, I used to have to say 'we' designed it. It's nice now to be able to say 'I,'" Col. Kalashnikov said Thursday. Russian officials say some 70 million Kalashnikovs of varying designs have been produced since 1947 and are officially in use in 55 countries. Rosvooruzheniye, the state arms export agency which is carving itself an increasingly profitable slice of the world arms market, says its AKs will remain "second to none" until at least 2025. Many are produced in plants around the Communist and former Communist world from China to Europe. Col. Kalashnikov latterly struck up a warm personal friendship with the wealthy American designer of the M-16, and refused to be bitter that he had scarcely made a ruble from his weapon. "I can't afford to retire," he joked Thursday.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
جريدة الجordanية المستقلة

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephone: 6843111, 6996334

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

On verge of new crisis

THE ISRAELI government's impending decision to build some 6,500 housing units in Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem is bound to disrupt the fragile peace process not only with the Palestinian side but also with the other Arab parties. As East Jerusalem occupies a central place in Arab and Muslim hearts and minds, any further attempts by Israel to create new facts that aim to predetermine the outcome of the final-status talks will most certainly hinder the ongoing efforts to bring the peace negotiations to a successful end.

His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Crown Prince Hassan and the government have voiced alarm at Israel's determination to irrevocably change the character and status of Arab Jerusalem. The King's first word upon his return on Thursday represented a clear warning to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to yield to domestic pressure and approve construction on Arab lands in Jerusalem. True, Mr. Netanyahu may risk a split in the ranks of his Likud-led government by not giving the green light for additional encroachments on these lands, but he would be on safer grounds, nationally and internationally, if he does not precipitate another crisis in the peace process.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat also has voiced his deepest concern about Israeli plans to start a new settlement in East Jerusalem and reiterated his determination to raise this issue during his upcoming visit to Washington for talks with President Bill Clinton. The Clinton-Arafat talks are scheduled to take place on March 3. By then, however, an Israeli government decision might have been taken.

The final-status talks on Jerusalem are supposed to start next month. Would it not be infinitely more prudent for the Netanyahu team to put on hold its plans to build on land which is admittedly occupied territory till the two sides have had an opportunity to decide on the future of Jerusalem? What is the sense in agreeing to consider the final status of the Holy City if Israel continues to create new realities that aim to prejudice the outcome of these talks? Where is the Israeli good faith in seeking a negotiated settlement of all remaining issues dividing the two parties if the Netanyahu government seeks to demonstrate that it and it alone will decide the results of the final-status negotiations?

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE OPENING of the Palestine financial market in Nablus this week is a very important step towards a market economy and towards reconstructing Palestine on sound basis, said a writer for Al Ra'i. Indeed, this is a very vital step towards founding the Palestine state in the coming months and the brains behind it are truly oriented towards opening up the Palestinian territories to the world economies, said the columnist, who writes under the pen name Meem. The creation of this financial market, said the writer, means the country is moving away from the socialist and state-controlled economy which had proved ineffective and obsolete and kept many countries in Eastern Europe and the Arab World backward and lacking the means for economic progress. The writer said the Palestine National Authority's liberal economic orientation reflects moderation, open mindedness to the world economic developments and displays a genuine desire to achieve prosperity for the Palestinian people.

A WRITER for Al Dustour reflected on King Hussein's current tour abroad to muster support for the Arab countries' causes and to rally support for a comprehensive and just solution to the Middle East problem. Hamadeh Faraneh said the King's visit to Morocco, whose King Hassan II chairs a pan-Arab committee on Jerusalem, aimed at stimulating the committee's work in protecting Jerusalem's Arab identity. King Hussein's visit to Rabat was designed to revive King Hassan's role in connection with Jerusalem; and the statement that summed up the talks stressed the similarity in the two leaders' views concerning the identity of the Arab city and the need for the international legitimacy to be respected and U.N. Security Council resolutions to be implemented, said the writer. King Hussein's keenness on rallying Arab ranks in the face of common challenges facing the Arab World is not a novelty but, said the writer, his trip to Rabat and the joint statement issued after the talks with King Hassan was a necessary step to be taken at this crucial time when Israel is going ahead with plans to Judaize Jerusalem and build Jewish settlements on Arab territory.

Jordanian Perspective

Israel plans to circumvent Palestinian tourism

By Dr. Musa Keilani

PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu is again defying the fundamentals of the peace process by declaring his determination to continue building Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, particularly Arab East Jerusalem.

The concerted focus that His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan gave, in their recent statements, to the present status of Arab East Jerusalem as occupied territory was prompted by the realisation that the Israeli leader does not seem to have comprehended the Jordanian message that any tampering with Arab Jerusalem was fraught with dangers. Jordan is keen to see Arab East Jerusalem as the political capital of an independent Palestinian state and the entire Holy City being the religious capital of Muslims, Christians and Jews.

Meanwhile, it seems that it is not only religious sentiments that are driving Mr. Netanyahu and his Likudists to continue their efforts to consolidate Israeli grip on Arab East Jerusalem. Information coming from the other side of the River Jordan clearly indicates that the Israeli confiscation of 6,000 dunums of land at Jabal Abu Ghneim, known to Israelis as Har Homa, and plans to build some 6,500 housing units for Jews there are not only aimed at reinforcing the Jewish presence in the area. The project aims at establishing what Israel sees as a "new Bethlehem." Under the plan, every commercial activity in Bethlehem will be moved to the Jewish settlement at Jabal Al Gneim. Present proposals call for building at least 10 five star hotels and shopping malls exclusively allocated for Jews, and create a new "elite of Bethlehem" just as Israel created a "Nazareth elite" that excluded Arabs. The idea, it seems, is to maintain Bethlehem only as a religious site while luring away all commercial potential of tourism to

the proposed "new Bethlehem" or Har Homa.

If the Israeli plan for Har Homa is realised, then the project's opening in 1999 would coincide with Israeli celebrations of the new millennium. The celebrations, coupled with Pope John Paul's expected visit to the Holy Land in 1999, would give a major boost to tourism in the area; but Israel is planning from now to ensure that no Palestinian is going to benefit from the boom. All commercial activities related to tourism would be moved to Har Homa: all tourists will be lured into staying at the hotels there; the proposed shopping mall there would replace the Arab-owned businesses in the vicinity of the Church of Nativity. Buses will simply ferry tourists to the Church of Nativity and would take them back immediately to Har Homa, where they would be offered the "luxury" of shopping within the hotel complexes rather than the Palestinian-owned shops near the church itself.

The "political challenge" that some of Mr. Netanyahu's allies in the coalition government has put up to pressure the prime minister to approve the project can easily be explained. Those who even threatened to bring down the government if no approval was given to the project are actually the front men of Israeli business interests.

Palestinians have been prodded into adopting such a headline stand simply because their paymasters wanted them to do so. Billions of shekels in profit are at stake for Israeli businesses which want to lead the process of creating a "new Bethlehem." And hence the huge uproar made by many members of the Israeli parliament as well as senior politicians to pressure the prime minister.

These well-orchestrated Israeli plans remained under wraps until recently. But some Palestinians have seen the dangers posed to their traditional livelihood in the

Bethlehem area coming up. We therefore expect to see Palestinian demonstrations and protests against the Har Homa project soon.

More importantly, the Har Homa project, coupled with continued settlement building elsewhere in the occupied territories, pose serious dangers to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Regardless of the commercial implications of creating a "new Bethlehem" with all the support that the Israeli government could offer it, Jabal Gneim is Palestinian territory and should remain so, and Israel should not tamper with the status of any inch of the occupied territories. It should live up to its commitment to the final status negotiations with the Palestinians and to produce an equitable solution that is essentially based on returning Palestinian territory to the Palestinian people. If Mr. Netanyahu is not willing to accept this reality, then all those who are pinning high hopes on the peace process to produce a new Middle East are in serious trouble. If Israel has its way, then there will be a new Middle East, but it would not even remotely resemble the goals set out when the Arabs and Israelis got together in Madrid in 1992.

Notwithstanding loud proclamations from Washington that the U.S. is unable to influence Israel into accepting the real requirements of peace in the Middle East and all the statements being made hailing the Hebron agreement, the reality that is staring at all of us is that the peace process is going in the wrong direction. The only party which is able to stem the tide and rechannel it in the right course is Washington. And if it claims its inability to influence the outcome of the peace process, then it is shirking its international responsibility and will be held to account by the future generations.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

King's European tour, visit to Morocco aimed to protect Arab identity of Jerusalem

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

THE QUESTION of Jerusalem, the rights of the Palestinian refugees and the peace process were among the main topics highlighted in the local dailies in the past week. Also given some prominence was the conflict in Sudan and a number of domestic affairs.

Perhaps the most prominent Arab diplomatic offensive launched to advocate Arab causes was that spearheaded this week by His Majesty King Hussein who toured several European countries and visited Morocco to rally support for the Arab identity of Jerusalem and the rights of the Palestinian refugees in their homeland, said Al Ra'i in an editorial. The paper said that King Hussein's tour manifested the identical views held by Jordan, the European countries as well as Morocco over the fact that Arab Jerusalem remains an occupied Arab territory and Israel's moves to change its Arab and Islamic character are null and void. In his tour, said the paper, the King warned against ongoing Israeli settlement programmes in Jerusalem and other parts of the occupied Palestinian lands, stressing

the need for pressure to be exerted on Israel to halt its present policies.

Al Dustour for its part said that King Hussein, who has been advocating Jordan's demand for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, has focused in his tour on the need for implementing international legitimacy resolutions and respect of the Palestinian people's rights.

The paper said that the King made it clear that no peace can be sustained if the people of this region are not allowed to reap its benefits and enjoy stability, security and economic progress. In the light of the ongoing Israeli settlement programmes, said the paper, the aspired peace remains out of the region's reach.

Describing the question of the Palestinian refugees as a land mine set to explode any moment and ruin the peace process, a writer for Al Ra'i daily said there can be no meaning of any accords or agreements between the Israelis and the Arabs if the refugees problem remains unresolved. Sultan Al Harab said the Palestinian refugees have been waiting for a solution to their problem since the 1948 which saw them dispersed and scattered in Arab and foreign countries, deprived of their basic rights

and their homeland. "How can a Jewish settler arriving in Israel from America or Europe settle on Arab lands in Palestine when the legitimate owners of this land remain displaced and homeless and why a resident of the Arab town of Hebron cannot return to his home inside the town while Jews from around the globe are brought into the Arab land to settle in Arab homes seized by force?" asked the writer. He said in the past 50 years the refugees have been scattered outside their homes and properties which were occupied by Israel by force and until now they are still waiting for a solution to their problem.

A writer for Al Dustour demanded that the working group on refugees in the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process be revived and immediately start discussing the future of the Palestinian refugees. Those refugees evicted from their homeland since 1948 should have the right to compensation or repatriation while those evicted since 1967 should be allowed to return if the peace process is to succeed, said Taher Adwan. Until the refugees problem has been resolved in a just and acceptable manner and until the Palestinians regain control over their

own property and lands in occupied Palestine there can be no peace at all, he said. Since the refugees problem concerns the Palestinians and the Israelis as well as Jordan which hosts most of the displaced people, he added, a solution could also be worked within the framework of tripartite meetings in implementation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty which provided for a solution to the refugees problem, in addition to the Oslo accords which paved the ground for a Palestinian-Israeli settlement.

By building more settlements on the occupied Palestinian lands, Israel is planting the seeds of permanent hostility between the Arabs and Jews and by claiming that the settlements are necessary to ensure peace for the Jewish state, it is in fact ruining any chance for security in the whole region, said Ahmad Misleh a writer for Al Ra'i. If security is the red line for the Israelis, Arab lands constitute the red line for the Palestinians and if Israel continues to occupy Arab lands there can be no security for the Israelis, said the writer. The only way to ensure security for the Israelis is through peace which guarantees the return of Arab lands to their legiti-

mate owners under international law and in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, continued the writer. He expressed pessimism over the peace process in the light of Israel's continued settlements policy and its on going attempts to Judaize the Arab city of Jerusalem.

Discussing the situation in Sudan, a writer for Al Dustour warned against an Arab-African confrontation in the African continent as a result of the conflict going on in Sudan. Saleh Qallab said that there is also the danger of a Christian-Muslim conflict in and around Sudan as a result of interference in Sudan's internal affairs on the part of the countries neighbouring Sudan on the one hand and Khartoum's stands vis-a-vis these neighbours on the other. The wise leaders of the Arab World, he said, are called upon to defuse the situation and prevent such destructive conflict and ought to remember that the Christian and Muslim countries of Africa had refrained from establishing diplomatic ties with Israel in spite of their relations with the Arab countries and have initiated contacts with the Jewish state only after Egypt had concluded a peace treaty with Israel. The writer said

that the Arabs who have uneasy relations with their two Muslim neighbours — Turkey and Iran — should take care not to fuel new hostilities with their neighbours in Africa.

A writer for Al Ra'i daily bailed a decision by eight Jordanian political parties to merge and form a united party with common political lines and said that the country will reap many benefits from such development and put an end to confusion concerning their different ideologies.

Mohammad Kharoub said that once the eight groups have united, they will reduce by at least 40 per cent of the number of the existing political parties in Jordan and form the largest party in the country with a broad base encompassing a wide spectrum of political concepts. The writer said a single strong party will be in a stronger position to address many of the economic ills in Jordan, express the majority's views concerning normalisation with Israel, the one-person, one-vote election law, corruption issues, investment and social justice. The writer said that a single but strong political group will encourage more and more Jordanians to join in and contribute to the development of their country.

LETTERS

Arab Nation vs Arab nations

To the Editor:

AS SOMEONE academically trained in the study of international relations and comparative politics, I read with interest Rami Khouri's column "Some refreshing news on the condition of the Arab Nation" (Jordan Times, Feb. 18, 1997).

After reading this piece, and giving considerable thought to the ideas presented, two fundamental questions came to my mind:

1. The macroeconomic statistics Mr. Khouri presented appeared to present a positive outlook of the progress of the Arab Nation during the 1980-1995 period. However, macroeconomic figures are irrelevant unless broken down to comparisons of the actual changes and conditions of the individual states comprising the Arab Nation.

2. The concept of an Arab Nation has always puzzled me. I believe there is a tendency to overuse this term, perhaps in an attempt to create the illusion that there exists such an entity as a homogeneous grouping in the world which can be described as an Arab Nation.

Following are some of my ideas regarding each of the above points based on the fact that I have lived in this region since February 1992 and spent considerable years as an undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate student studying international relations with concentrations in the Middle East.

Any statistician will exercise caution when using macroeconomic statistics. This is perhaps even more important in evaluating the changes in the Arab Nation during the 1980-1995 period. While Mr. Khouri cites such macro figures as population increase (\$253 million in 1995, an increase of 26 per cent) and gross domestic product (\$529 billion in 1995, an increase of 21 per cent), he does discuss what impact these increases have had upon individual nation-states which comprise the overall Arab Nation.

I would suggest that these overall macro-statistics distort the actual conditions within the Arab World. This distortion is based upon several considerations:

1. Wealth within this group is skewed — a minority of people possesses a disproportionate amount of wealth. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states represent a small percentage of the

overall population, however, they possess a considerable amount of wealth due to their oil resources.

2. Macroeconomic figures suggest a per capita income of \$2,091 for this population base. However, the discrepancies between states such as Kuwait and Jordan are very considerable.

3. Population increase must also be analysed in a qualitative not merely quantitative manner. Imagine the impact of a 2.6 per cent increase in the population of a state such as Egypt, compared to that of Oman. Given the actual conditions in the two countries, i.e., per capita GDP, standards of living, employment figures, etc., Egypt can ill-afford to sustain this level of population growth whereas for Oman, a higher level is probably necessary.

4. Mr. Khouri considers the decrease in public spending as best news, stating that such expenditures have declined for the fourth year in a row. Again, I would question whether this decline is reflective of all individual states or whether those states with considerable larger populations, such as Egypt, who have also embarked upon serious efforts to privatise their economies, cancelled out the lack of efforts to curb government spending by the "welfare Gulf states."

I would like to mention that my comments reflect my reaction to the views presented by Mr. Khouri as I have not reviewed the "1996 unified Arab Economic Report" and am basing my points merely on those he has raised.

Since relocating to the Middle East in 1992, I have read innumerable references to the concept of Arab Nation. Perhaps it is my training in international relations, but I find it difficult to understand this concept and, perhaps more importantly, to accept its utility in analysing this part of the world.

To me, the use of the concept of an "Arab Nation" creates as much confusion in understanding the Middle East (and North Africa) as would the use of the concepts "European Nation" and "Latin American Nation" when trying to comprehend those regions. On the face of it, Europe and Latin America possess similar characteristics which would suggest they are nations: common religions, histories, languages (if one considers the Romance foundation for much of Europe), and cultures.

However, to attempt to explain the behaviour of any individual state in Europe or Latin America based upon their inclusion into the larger context of "nations" would be totally misleading. Scratch a "Euro-man" and you discover a Frenchman, a German, an Italian, etc. Similarly, look below the surface of a "Latino" and you meet a Chilean, an Argentine, a Brazilian, a Mexican. Geography, religion, language and other variables have created certain bonds, but these are vastly superseded by individual national identities.

I believe the same holds true for the Arab Nation. While the use of this term makes it analytically easier to view this grouping, it does not simplify an understanding of the dynamics within individual nations or between sovereign states. In general, the concept of "nation" has become, to a large extent, obsolete in the twentieth century, replaced by that of "nation-state." With the creation of the post-colonial world in the 1950-1970s, sovereignty became the basis for dividing individual nations. While there has been, and continues to be, serious debate as to the desirability of these creations, for the most part they have been accepted.

Sovereignty and national identities have supplanted, in my opinion, any common ties suggested by the idea of "nations." The conflicts during the past five decades between individual members of the Arab Nation, which continue in the present, illustrate that individual concern about sovereign rights takes precedence over any common feeling of "brotherhood." While I do not dispute that there are similarities between the peoples of this grouping, I would caution about the overuse of the term to explain or understand the dynamics within this region. Again, I would refer to the examples of Europe and Latin America as examples of the limitations of such an approach.

It has not been my intent to challenge Mr. Khouri and the views he presented in his column. However, I believe that there are some alternative ideas which must be taken into consideration. There are always problems in overgeneralisations and oversimplifications.

Bill Ennenbach
Amman

New

Netanyah

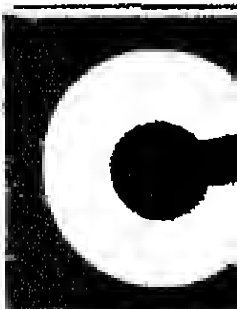
(continued from p

the future
have discus
to the Jerusa
which will be
further later
from the two
to which to
same cooperat
and other in
King Hussein
Hassan II cha
Committee
organisation of
King H
was overw
hospitality ac
and the asse
delegation and
impressed wi
achieved wi
referred to
Hassan's rece
France and St
said the re
was reasonab
Europeans
Kremlov on
the peace p
Palestinians
to begin final
and on finalis
that Europ
agreement.
said
prospects. Je
ation of a
and Palestinse
nations the Ku
and say that
a specific role

Netanyah

(continued from p

to phone trying
to prime minist
Al Netanyahu
related on the
changes, accor
officials quot
Yara
questioning
minister, th
said Yediot they
"taste" about
government
case against
in the affa
neglected after a
Thursday betwe



Maling Whole
Mushroom
450GR

مالينج مشروم
٤٥٠ غرام

All Krasdale
Cereal

كراسدايل طعام
فلوريد مع لوز حليب
مجانبي من حمودة

Uncle Bens
Rice 5 KG

روز انكل بنز
٥ كغم

Mars, Snickers,
Milk Way, mini
300GR

مارس, سنكيز,
ملكي وي, صغير
٣٠٠ غرام



Jordan mulls big stock market sell-off

10.000.000	2.000.000
------------	-----------

**TO ADVERTISE
IN THIS
SECTION
CALL
667171 EXT. 223
OR
684311 - 699634
EXT. 42**

Sports

Luc Alphand wins 2nd straight Super-G

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany (AP) — Luc Alphand of France won his second straight Super-G slalom Friday and took over the lead in overall World Cup standings.

Shrugging off the frustrations of the just-concluded world championship in Sestriere, Italy, where he failed to medal, Alphand bounced back in the first race after the worlds with a superb performance.

Alphand, who had never won a Super-G until his Jan. 29 triumph in Laax, Switzerland, mastered a

tough Kandahar course to win the race in one minute, 15.32 seconds.

Hermann Maier of Austria, a late starter at 32nd, posted a time of 1:15.87 to finish second, a personal best, while Werner Fraehner of Italy returned after knee surgery to clinch third place with a time of 1:15.90.

Ed Podivinsky of Canada, another late starter, placed fourth, while Kjetil-Andre Aamodt of Norway finished fifth and lost his overall lead to Alphand.

"The World Cup has given me momentum

again," said Alphand, who picked up 100 points for his victory to raise his total to 837 with 10 races left in the season.

"It's great satisfaction after Sestriere," Alphand said after his fifth win of the season.

Aamodt dropped to second with 786 points, while Alphand also extended his lead in Super-G standings.

Alphand is now favorite for Saturday's downhill and Sunday's Super-G. The Frenchman won last year's downhill here and is the defending World Cup champion in the event.

USA Boxing to repay \$1.3 m to USOC

COLORADO SPRINGS (R) — USA boxing agreed to repay \$1.3 million to the United States Olympic Committee after the USOC determined the funds had been improperly applied for or incorrectly accounted for in grant programmes since 1989.

USA Boxing, amateur boxing's governing body in the United States, announced the settlement on Thursday after the organization's president, Gary Toney, and USOC executive director Dick Schultz agreed on the amount to be repaid.

A USOC audit had found that USA Boxing owed \$3.18 million to the Olympic committee. But USA Boxing officials were able to show a special revue panel that \$1.9 million of that money had been spent appropriately on athletic programmes and the amount owed was reduced accordingly.

"I am pleased with the cooperative attitude demonstrated by Gary Toney and the leadership of USA Boxing," Schultz said.

"It will help us to get past this issue and to focus on programmes which will help prepare our boxers for the (2000) Olympic Games in Sydney and the 1999 Pan American Games."

Agassi, Washington fall in Memphis

MEMPHIS (R) — It appears Andre Agassi made the right decision pulling out of the recent U.S. Davis Cup tie against Brazil after the second seed was stunned by the South American nation's top player at the St. Jude Tennis Tournament on Wednesday.

Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten, ranked 83rd in the world, took advantage of a hot serve and Agassi's tender ankle to dump the former World No. 1 6-4 6-2 in 65 minutes on a day of second-round upsets in Memphis.

Fourth-seed Wimbledon runner-up Maliva Washington, also slowed by injury he suffered in winning a Davis Cup singles match against Brazil, dropped a 7-6 (10-8) 6-3 decision to 108th-ranked Argentinian Javier Frana.

In other second-round upsets, Germany's Alex Radulescu beat sixth seed Jason Stoltenberg of Australia, Armenian Sargis Sargsian ousted ninth-seeded American Alex O'Brien, Guillaume Raoux of France knocked out 14th seed Mark Woodforde of Australia, and Jeff Tarango bounced 16th-seeded fellow American Vince Spadea.

All the seeded players had received first-round byes and were seeing their



Maliva Washington

first action of the tournament.

Two-time champion Todd Martin, the third seed, escaped the fate of so many of his seeded brethren by taking out American qualifier Bryan Shelton 6-4 6-4.

But the performance of the 20-year-old Kuerten was the revelation of the night.

The Brazilian belied 18 years, won 29 of 32 first serve points and did not commit a single double fault.

"For me, this was pretty nice," Kuerten said. "One year ago I was sitting by my TV at home watching (Agassi) play."

Kuerten was also matching Agassi groundstroke and blasting winners by the American star even before Agassi re-sprained his ankle in the second set.

With the Brazilian leading 6-4 3-1, the match was halted for about 10 minutes while ATP tour trainer Bill Norris taped and examined Agassi's ankle before clearing him to continue.

Agassi, who also lost here in the second round last year, skipped the post-match interview and headed to a local hospital to have the ankle further examined, tournament officials said.

Washington, who won here in 1992, was severely limited in his mobility due to the effects of tendinitis of the knee that forced him to pull out of last week's San Jose tournament.

"I just wasn't able to do what I wanted to out there," he said. "I've been struggling with my knee since I came back from Brazil, but you have to play through some injuries."

Despite his limitations, Washington found himself serving for first set at 5-3. But he failed to hold and then lost a long, grueling tie-breaker before falling behind 5-0 in the second to the Argentine.

Do not be dazzled by stars, Grobbelaar match-fixing trial told

WINCHESTER (R) — Jurors in Britain's soccer match-fixing trial were warned on Thursday not to be dazzled by the "star quality" of the defendants.

They should not be swayed by the good looks, wealth, fame or charm of any of the three footballers on trial, said chief prosecutor Richard Calvert-Smith, summing up in the six-week trial.

"It is impossible not to be aware of the extra factor in this case — star quality, if you like," said Calvert-Smith.

"Even the court administration has been infected by it," he said noting that the voice over the intercom summoning the court each morning called the case of "Grobbelaar and others."

Former Liverpool goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar, former Wimbledon goal-

keeper Hans Segers and former Aston Villa and Wimbledon striker John Fashanu are charged with conspiring to throw matches in Britain's premier league.

A Malaysian businessman Heh Suan Lim is accused of paying the goalkeepers, through Fashanu, to rig the matches on behalf of a group of wealthy Asian gamblers.

The four deny the charges, saying they were merely forecasting results. "In fact the case is that of lim and others...The dominant partner in this arrangement was Mr Lim," said Calvert-Smith.

The prosecution has amassed mountains of bank evidence and telephone billing records which show that the four defendants were in constant telephone contact,

especially on the days of big matches.

Shortly after matches, Grobbelaar and Segers would pay large cash sums into their bank accounts.

Both defendants say the money was either for forecasting matches, which although not illegal, is against English Football Association rules, or from other business ventures.

Their defence lawyers have shown video footage of the soccer matches queried by the prosecution, but Calvert-Smith said these were unlikely to have offered proof of innocence.

"Of course, if Mr. Grobbelaar had in front of an audience of millions watched as a ball travelled slowly across the grass, through his legs, and over the line three times at a match at St James' Park,

we would have shown you a video to show he attempted to fix the match," said Calvert-Smith.

"There is a limit to what they can do in front of 50,000 people and a TV audience of millions," he added.

The case against Grobbelaar depends heavily on the evidence of his former business partner, Chris Vincent, who helped secretly to record a conversation in which Grobbelaar said he had lost thousands of pounds by "accidentally" saving goals in one match.

"This case is about corruption," he said. "Corruption relies for its discovery on whistleblowers," said Calvert-Smith.

Barcelona miss chance to cut Real's lead

SAN SEBASTIAN, Spain (R) — Barcelona threw away a golden opportunity to cut Real Madrid's six-point lead at the top of the Spanish First Division when they went down to two Javi De Pedro goals at Real Sociedad on Thursday.

The 2-0 defeat came 24 hours after Real Madrid lost their unbeaten league record in a 1-0 reverse at Rayo Vallecano, and is likely to spark off more speculation over the future of beleaguered manager Bobby Robson.

Earlier in the day, Barcelona president Jose Luis Nunez said former England manager Robson had his support and was not under an ultimatum to win the game.

But the style in which Barcelona lost is bound to create unease.

Robson's side were unlucky to see the referee award a penalty just before halftime after real striker George Craioveanu seemed to collide with defender Abelardo Fernandez.

Javi De Pedro had no problem beating Barcelona keeper Vitor Baia, who just 24 hours before had saved a spot kick for Portugal against Greece.



Germany's Elena Valbe climbs a hill on her way to win the women's 15 km cross country event at the Nordic World Ski Championships February 21. Italy's Stefania Belmondo took second place and Katerina Neumannova of the Czech Republic took third (Reuters photo)

Capriati advances in Oklahoma City

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma (R) — Fifth seed Jennifer Capriati shook off another slow start Thursday before storming into the quarter-finals of the IGA Tennis Classic.

The former teenage sensation, now 20-years-old, fell behind 0-3 in the first set to Kyoka Nagatsuka of Japan before rallying for a 6-3 6-2 victory in a second round match.

Capriati earned a quarter-final meeting with top-seeded Olympic champion Lindsay Davenport.

Third seed Kimberly Po

and fourth-seeded fellow American Lisa Raymond also moved into the quarter-finals, as did semi-retired veteran Pam Shriver.

The 19th-ranked Po easily dismissed local favourite Lindsay Lee 6-1 6-4 and will next face compatriot Sandra Cacic.

Raymond, ranked 26th, stopped Alexia Dechaume-Balleret of France 6-4 6-3 to set up a quarter-final with Shriver.

The 34-year-old Shriver, who rarely plays singles anymore, advanced with a 6-4 6-3 win over Canadian Rene Simpson.

"I'm probably ending a 19-year (singles) career

here, so it's nice to get two wins and get into the quarter-finals," Shriver said. "I've made no future plans to play singles again on the corel WTA tour."

Capriati, now ranked 27th in the second year of her comeback, got off to a similarly slow start in her first round match before turning her game up a few notches.

"I've been a slow starter this week," said Capriati, who beat Davenport in the semifinals of the Sydney International in Australia last month.

"It takes me a while to get into it. It's a mental thing. I have to be ready for the first point," she said.

FOR RENT

2 bedrooms luxury apartment across from Amra Hotel. Furnished or unfurnished. Great View. For more information: Call 5523257 Mr. Ibrahim.

REQUIRED

English teacher - native speaker To give private English language tutoring to a Jordanian woman Tel.: (634707)

Furnished Flat For Rent

One bedroom, one sitting and dining room, complete kitchen and bathroom, central heating and separate telephone. Location: Near Aramex. For further information, please call Tel.: 680131

VILLA FOR RENT

Fully furnished (top quality) - 2 Bedrooms - Fireplace - Telephone - Garage. Monthly Rent: U.S.\$ 1,200 including water, electricity and heating. Tel./Fax : 847200

Dr. Ala Uddin Toukan

Specialist in Gastrointestinal and Liver Diseases.

Is pleased to announce the inauguration of his Private Clinic in the Hani Medical Building, Jabel Amman, Fifth Circle, next to The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.

From 9 am - 1 pm 3 - 6.30 pm Telephone No : 863099

STOP & SHOP

THE LEADING FOOD EMPORIUM

SHOP BY PHONE !! FREE HOME DELIVERY ..

JUST ARRIVED FROM GERMANY

REINERT

FRESH COLD CUTS

BIG VARIETIES OF COLD CUTS

- * TURKEY BREAST 21.500 KILO.
- * TURKEY BREAST WITH TRUFFLE 15.000 KILO.
- * HAM BLACKY AND BLONDY 17.500 KILO.

STOP & SHOP THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR SHOPPING

OPEN DAILY 8:30 AM - 8:00 PM

TEL: 625140 / 623427 AMMAN JABAL EL WEIBDEH

The Modern Schools

AL - ASRIYYA

المدراس الحديثة

seek highly qualified teachers:

1. For IGCSE & GCE' O & A level programs
2. For Grades 1-3
3. For KG
4. For counselling

Distinguished experience and excellent English are required.

Application forms are obtained at the school building from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Khalda - Zahri St.
P.O. Box 1002 - Amman 11821
Telefax 837267 / 837859

IA

4'E

ic.

will



Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

THE THEATRE WILL BE CLOSED UNTIL MARCH 1 FOR MAINTENANCE & REDECORATION WE WILL BE BACK WITH

Aman.. Ya Ho

Abu Ghneim colony aims at strangling Arab East Jerusalem — Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinians say they are ready to give their all to stop a new Jewish settlement which would seal a "ring of settlements" around Arab East Jerusalem and cut it off from the rest of the West Bank.

"We've lost a lot of fights against settlements, but this next one will be a harsh one that we cannot afford to lose," said Mohammad Jaddallah, a member of the Palestinian Land Defence Committee.

"If Israel decides to go ahead with building" at the site, which Israelis call Har Homa, "the Palestinian response will be hard and violent," he told AFP.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is prepared to give a green light to build 6,500 new Jewish homes at although he has delayed making the decision until next week, his advisers said.

The settlement is to be built on 185 hectares of Arab land confiscated by Israel in 1991 on Jabal Abu Ghneim, a hill which dominates the route between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem to the south.

"If Har Homa is implemented it will close off the southeast side of East Jerusalem. It's part of a wall of settlements and Israeli construction entirely encircling East Jerusalem," said settlement expert Khalil Tufajki.

Mr. Tufajki, who monitors settlement activity for the Orient House, the unofficial Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) headquarters in East Jerusalem, showed a map where the blue of Israeli construction closes around the yellow marking older Arab neighbourhoods.

"Building on Jabal Abu Ghneim will separate access from East Jerusalem from Bethlehem and the surrounding villages and from the West Bank in general," he said.

Villages around Bethlehem will also be closed on one side by Har Homa and on the other by settlements further south in the West Bank "meaning they will have no room for future expansion," he said.

A neighbourhood on Jabal Abu Ghneim would connect with two other planned settlements, Givat Arba and Givat Hamatos, which along with the existing neighbourhood Gilo would completely cover Jerusalem's southern face to Bethlehem.

Land confiscations for Givat Arba have been held up in Israeli courts, but settlement at Givat Hamatos has already started with the installing of trailers for residents ahead of building.

Building 6,500 housing units on Jabal Abu Ghneim would bring in 20,000 to 30,000 Jewish residents, "which would completely overturn the demographics in Jerusalem," Mr. Tufajki said.

Since 1967, the Israeli government has built some 40,000 homes for Jews in Arab East Jerusalem in 10 settlements built on the northern and southern sides of the city. It has never built any homes for Palestinians, human rights groups say.

To the east of the city stands the settlement Maale Adumim and a planned ring highway around Jerusalem would cut off Palestinian expansion in that direction, Mr. Tufajki said.

Mr. Jaddallah dismissed claims by Netanyahu aides that money for homes for Palestinians would also be

released with the eventual decision to build Har Homa. "This is just to ease world opinion," he said.

The Israeli housing ministry said in May 1995 that it would build housing for the Palestinian population, but the projects have never materialised.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has urged international backers of the Middle East peace process to force Israel to abide by the accords it has signed, amid the row over Jewish settlements in Arab East Jerusalem.

"I am looking for the co-sponsors, America and Russia, the European Union and those who signed the agreement in the White House to protect the peace which they have signed," Mr. Arafat told Turkish television channel TRT in an interview on Thursday.

"Patience has limits," said Mr. Arafat, who was on a one-day visit to Ankara for meetings with Turkish officials.

Mr. Arafat accused Israel of laying a "siege" they are insisting on following up against the Palestinian people and breaking accords establishing Palestinian self-rule.

Turkey's Islamist prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, backed Mr. Arafat. "Jerusalem is an issue not just for the Palestinian people but for all the Muslim world," he told reporters before talks with the PLO leader.

Mr. Arafat also held talks with President Suleyman Demirel on Turkey's contribution to the peace process. Turkey last week sent 17 soldiers to the West Bank town of Hebron as part of a multinational monitoring force.



RELIEF FOR IRAQIS: A boat loaded with food and medical supplies arrives at Um Qasr port of the southern Iraqi city of Basra from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Thursday. The boat, called "The First Mercy Trip," is loaded with nearly \$1 million worth of food and medicine as a gift from the UAE to the sanctions-hit country. It is the second shipment by UAE volunteers in two months following the first delivery in January. More "mercy shipments" will be conducted in the future, according to UAE organisers (Reuters photo).

Ekeus begins new mission with discussions with Aziz

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — U.N. disarmament envoy Rolf Ekeus met Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz here Friday in his probe to determine whether Iraq is hiding banned long-range missiles and other weapons.

It was the second Ekeus-Aziz encounter since the chairman of the U.N. special commission (UNSCOM) tasked with disarming Iraq started his mission on Thursday.

The official news agency INA said Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf and the oil minister, General Ameer Rasheed, also took part in the meeting as they did on the previous day. But it gave no details on their talks.

A third round of talks was to be held later Friday, it said.

A U.N. official said that Mr. Ekeus, a former Swedish diplomat, would discuss "all the weapons files, particularly missiles and chemical weapons" during his three-day visit.

Mr. Ekeus said after his last trip to Baghdad in December that he suspected Iraq was hiding more than the six to 16 missiles previously estimated.

The Pentagon accused Iraq earlier this month of concealing up to 25 ballistic missiles in violation of U.N. resolutions passed after the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait.

An Iraqi newspaper said Friday that Iraq had provided the United Nations with all the information it wanted on long-range missiles and other weapons and accused the international body of unfairly keeping sanctions in place.

Al Thawra, which is published by Iraq's ruling Baath Party, said: "Iraq is not hiding missiles or information, as Mr. Ekeus claims

or thinks, and we are not responsible if he does not believe what we have told him."

The editorial accused him of "prolonging the suffering" of the Iraqi people by refusing to conclude that Iraq has fulfilled its pledge to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on Iraq after Iraqi invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The sanctions prevent Iraq from selling oil, its economic mainstay, until it has destroyed its weaponry.

Last month, Mr. Ekeus said Iraq was suspected of having transporters, launchers, support systems, rockets, and fuel weapons, "every piece of what is necessary to constitute an operational (missile) force."

He said UNSCOM remained concerned about biological weapons, with Iraq suspected of concealing "more sophisticated bombs than what they have declared to us," including spraying devices.

In December, Mr. Ekeus also failed to persuade Baghdad to allow his inspectors to remove missile engines for analysis in the United States, and said he would raise the issue again during his next trip.

Since November, Iraq has blocked the removal of the missile engines which UNSCOM officials dug up.

Although Iraq unearthed debris from four destroyed missile engines under U.N. supervision in December, the United Nations said it was not enough.

A U.N. source here added that a U.N. inspection team here since Feb. 6 had found a "small piece from a missile engine."

Peres says Habad sect spreading 'evil and hatred in Israel'

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli opposition leader Shimon Peres has blasted an Australian billionaire and the ultra-orthodox Jewish Habad sect for spreading "evil and hatred" by bankrolling settlement of occupied Arab lands.

Habad in reaction accused Mr. Peres of incitement against it because of political differences.

"Gutnick — he comes to pass out funds in order to argue, to spread evil and hatred, like all Habad now," Mr. Peres told students at the religious Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv in remarks broadcast on Thursday by Israel Radio.

Mining mogul Joseph Gutnick, 44, a Habad adherent, has privately funded building in Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Habad, a worldwide movement devoted to bringing Jews to orthodox observance, says Israel's handing any land to Arabs "endangers" the Jewish state.

Habad in Israel backed Benjamin Netanyahu against then Prime Minister Peres in elections last May. Mr. Netanyahu defeated Mr. Peres, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for deals handing parts of the West Bank to Palestinian rule, by less than a percentage point.

"What Peres is doing is incitement against Habad. Apparently something is defective with his democratic outlook. In his eyes, whoever does not agree with his political line is illegitimate," Habad Israel spokesman Menachem Brod said.

"Habad never attacked Peres personally and never spoke with hatred against him. But we differ from his political line and view it as very dangerous for Israel's future and security."

A centrepiece of the Habad campaign — which some Israelis deemed racist — was a slogan Mr. Gutnick took credit for: "Netanyahu is good for the Jews."

"Habad spread evil against us. Once it was a party that spread love of Israel. Now it is spreading hatred in Israel," Mr. Peres said.

Mr. Habad says it is not a political party. Its endorsement of Mr. Netanyahu was the first time it officially backed a candidate in an Israeli election.

COLUMN

Brain tumour removed from Taylor

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A benign brain tumour was removed from behind the left ear of Elizabeth Taylor in a three-hour operation. The actress, a two-time Academy Award-winner, was expected to recover fully. The tumour was discovered during a routine brain scan Feb. 3. A large group of fans, reporters and TV cameras awaited outside the hospital for news of Taylor, who turns 65 next week. Her four children were also on hand Thursday.

Mandela, ex-wife appear together

SOWETO, South Africa (AP) — A potentially thorny moment passed smoothly when President Nelson Mandela's ex-wife, Winnie, showed up at a ceremony attended by Mandela and his companion. It was the first time all three were seen at the same public function. Mandela and Graça Machel sat together on a podium for the ceremony Thursday kicking off Mandela's campaign to promote education in South Africa. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela sat three seats from Mandela. She and Mandela did not speak and hardly looked at each other. Madikizela-Mandela and Machel also had no contact.

Scare at 'Evita' screening

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — Police cleared a downtown theatre after someone set off an insecticide bomb as the audience watched the premiere of Alan Parker's "Evita." There were no injuries or arrests, police said. Insecticide bombs are used to fumigate houses, movie, which depicts the life of Argentina's former first lady Eva Peron, has sparked controversy in a country where many people strongly admire the late wife of former President Juan Peron.

Hardup Romania to give Chirac 'very special' gift

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Romania's cash-strapped parliament will offer French President Jacques Chirac a cheap but "very special" gift when he was to visit Friday officials said here. Ion Diaconescu, the Romanian parliament's speaker, had a budget of only 500,000 lei (about \$60) to get Chirac a gift, the officials said, adding, however that the present was to "very special." Romania is suffering under an austerity programme aimed at modernising its struggling economy. And the parliament has recently set stiff limits on its own spending.

New Yorkers stream into marriage offices

NEW YORK (R) — New Yorkers are crowding the corridors of city marriage offices, but officials are not sure whether it is romance or immigrants rushing to wed U.S. citizens because they fear deportation under a new immigration law. City officials said that on Tuesday and Wednesday, fights even broke out among couples, who had been waiting for hours to collect marriage licences or to be joined in brief marriage ceremonies. "In my 11 years here this is the biggest increase in marriages I've ever seen," said New York City clerk Carlos Cuevas, head of the city's five marriage bureaux. He said the trend started last month with 2,109 weddings in Manhattan — an increase of 88 per cent in marriage performed compared with January 1996. The increase in the borough of Queens was 118 per cent, he said.

Mubarak: Tourabi responsible for all suffering of Sudanese

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Sudan's parliamentary speaker, Sheikh Hassan Al Tourabi, was responsible for all the suffering in Sudan.

"The current regime will not last long: Sudan suffers from hunger and an economic collapse," Mr. Mubarak said in an interview to be published by three Lebanese weeklies on Friday.

Mr. Mubarak, however, opposed any partition of Egypt's southern neighbour. "Sudan's partitioning will bring more violence, and the biggest mistake will be to work for such an end. Sudan's unity is the most important element concerning the stability of this delicate region," he said.

Mr. Mubarak reiterated his accusations holding Sudan responsible for the attempt against his life in 1995 in Addis Ababa.

"Tourabi pretends to ignore everything concerning the assassination attempt. However, 10 days ago, he admitted that some (people who took part in the operation) sought refuge in Sudan," he said.

"Sudan still hosts terrorists whom he sends us through the eastern desert. When they are arrested, they admit during interrogation that they were trained in Sudan," he said. New U.N. report on the launch of an air embargo against Sudan, which has been accused of sponsoring international terrorism, is completed, a U.N. official said Thursday.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan "will make (the report) available early next week," spokesman Fred Eckhard told a press conference in New York.

Sudan has been under U.N. diplomatic sanctions since last May for refusing to extradite three suspects in the assassination attempt on Mr. Mubarak.

Khartoum says the three

radicals are not on its territory.

Last August, the Security Council agreed to ban international flights by Sudan Airways, proposing to meet in November to set a start date for the embargo.

The council has postponed this discussion as several countries, including Russia, are concerned about the embargo's impact on the maintenance of Sudan Airways planes and humanitarian operations in southern Sudan.

France wants a fixed term for the embargo while Washington and London say it should have no time limit, like the U.N. sanctions on Iraq and Libya.

Egypt has been lobbying council members furiously to apply a permanent embargo, for which it voted last August.

A New York based human rights group said Friday a Sudanese military tribunal was conducting a secret trial of 21 alleged coup plotters in Khartoum.

In a letter to Sudanese President Lieutenant-General Omar Al Bashir, Human Rights Watch said the trial, widespread arrests by security agents and reported torture reflected how the human rights situation had worsened in the last few months.

It said the accused, known as "the Port Sudan defendants," included 10 civilians, seven of whom were never in the military, and they went on trial at military intelligence headquarters this month.

Human Rights Watch said the procedures in the secret trial made "a mockery of justice" as the defendants had no rights to defence lawyers in a tribunal that was not legally qualified.

It said before last year most similar trials of alleged coup plotters took place in civilian courts except for the execution of 28 military officers in 1990 following a summary

trial.

Human Rights Watch said Gen. Bashir's government was apparently relying on secret military tribunals because convictions and heavier sentences were more likely than in civilian courts.

Sudan's labour leader has called for an Arab summit to discuss the situation in east Sudan and urged Egypt to adopt policies serving the interests of the two countries, the press reported Friday.

Taj Alisr Abdoun, who was reelected by the 13th conference as president of the workers federations, told Al-Sudan Al-Hadith newspaper that the calls were made at a meeting in Khartoum Thursday.

"We called for an Arab summit to discuss acts of aggression on Sudan by nations that serve international Zionist interests," Mr. Abdoun was quoted as saying.

The unions denounced the Sudanese opposition abroad, saying it was "fully responsible" for the capture of the eastern border towns of Kurmuk and Qeissan by "agitating arrogant powers and neighbouring countries against Sudan," he said.

They also urged all workers in Sudan to beat to the battlefield

to support the war effort in eastern Sudan, he said.

Sudan's National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which groups the northern opposition and southern rebels, launched an offensive on eastern Sudan in Jan. in a bid to overthrow the government in Khartoum.

Sudan is accusing Ethiopia and Eritrea of helping the rebels, a charge they have both denied.

The unions, meanwhile, urged Egypt to "assume a genuine position that serves the two peoples of the Nile valley" and to ban the activities of the Cairo-based Workers Federation, Mr. Abdoun said.

Lebanon committee condemns Israeli raid

BEIRUT (AFP) — The international committee monitoring the ceasefire in South Lebanon has condemned Israeli shelling which killed a woman last week and wounded two other Lebanese civilians.

The monitoring group, composed of representatives from France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the United States, "unanimously condemned the shelling on Feb. 18," in a statement to the media issued Thursday.

The committee expressed "serious concern" at the killing of Naamah Hallal, 33, by a shell which fell near her house in Habush in the Iqlim Al Tuffah region near the port city of Sidon.

Another woman and a man were wounded in the shelling of Habush and the villages of Arab Salim and Kfar Roummame.

The Israelis said the attack "was in self-defence against launching sites in the villages," according to the committee's statement, issued after two days of meetings.

This is the fourth time that Israel has been blamed for bombardments which killed or wounded civilians in South Lebanon since the committee was set up in August following the April 26 truce accord which ended an Israeli offensive against Hizbollah in South Lebanon.

U.S. court shuts down Internet sex sites on telephone scam charges

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A U.S. federal court has order of three Internet sites closed following a complaint that users had unwittingly run up huge phone bills to a number in Moldova while seeking pornographic pictures.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) said it had won a restraining order from a U.S. district court in New York halting an elaborate scam in which thousands of consumers incurred hundreds of thousands of dollars in international calls.

The complaint, lodged after consumers and parents contested their phone bills, targeted five enterprises and individuals doing business as electronic forms management on web sites www.beavisbutthead.com, www.sexygirls.com and www.tadut.com.

According to the FTC, users who visited one of the sites first had to download a special viewer programme known as "David.exe." But during the operation, the commission charged, the programme disconnected their computers from their Internet service provider and reconnected them to a phone number in Moldova, formerly part of the Soviet Union.

The so-called "Trojan horse" software programme also turned off modem speakers so that consumers could hear neither the disconnect nor the international dialing.

The FTC charged that even after users left the site and went on to other Internet or word-processing activities they continued to incur international calling charges of more than \$2 a minute.

Only after they shut down their computers were users disconnected.

"We're talking about a high-tech fraud that threatens traffic on the information superhighway," said FTC Director of Consumer Protection Jodie Bernstein.

The software programme used by the defendants risks consumers' sense of security about using the Internet.

Ms. Bernstein thanked AT and T for its cooperation in the case. But the company's corporate security manager, Richard Pettito, made clear that AT and T was counting on users to pay up.

"Ultimately we expect all consumers to pay their bills," he told the Wall Street Journal.

The FTC said the defendants made money on the deal when they were paid by the foreign telephone carrier to which the international calls were assigned.

Users were in fact connected to a site in Canada but were charged at rates for Moldova, according to the complaint.

The commission said that until Jan. 27 consumers had been told they could view the material for free. After that, according to the FTC, the defendants informed visitors to the sites they would be connected to Moldova but did not add that the international charges would continue to apply once they went on to other activities.

Lawyers for the defendants nonetheless insisted that consumers had been adequately informed of the charges they would absorb.

Israeli couple

Two Israeli couples were taken into custody by Egyptian police in the Sinai Peninsula after they were released from Israeli custody. The couples were taken to a military base in the Sinai Peninsula and held there for several days. The Israeli government said the couples were taken into custody because they were suspected of being involved in a terrorist plot. The Egyptian government said the couples were taken into custody because they were suspected of being involved in a terrorist plot.

Bar-On could govern

Bar-On could govern. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing Bar-On as the new prime minister. Bar-On is a member of the Knesset and has been a vocal critic of the current government. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing Bar-On as the new prime minister. Bar-On is a member of the Knesset and has been a vocal critic of the current government.

Labour sets

Labour sets. The Israeli Labour Party is setting up a new committee to investigate the activities of the Knesset. The committee will be headed by a senior Labour Party official. The Israeli Labour Party is setting up a new committee to investigate the activities of the Knesset. The committee will be headed by a senior Labour Party official.

Internal Secu

Internal Secu. The Israeli Security Council is considering the possibility of appointing a new member. The council is currently composed of seven members. The Israeli Security Council is considering the possibility of appointing a new member. The council is currently composed of seven members.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.

Minister Depu

Minister Depu. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers. The Israeli government is considering the possibility of appointing a new minister. The government is currently composed of 19 ministers.